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THE
PRINCIPLES
OF ✓
CHURCH HISTORY

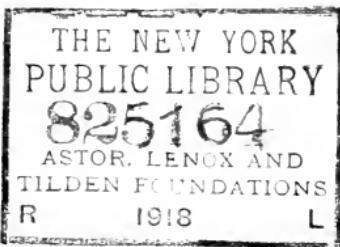
ADAPTED TO THE YOUNG.

BY THE
REV. DAVID D. VAN ANTWERP, A.M.

SECOND EDITION.

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TO THE
RT. REV. THOMAS ATKINSON, D.D., L.L.D.
BISHOP OF NORTH CAROLINA ;
Whose many admirable qualities have won for him a
shining fame, in the American Church. This work
is, by his permission, affectionately dedicated by his
friend and servant,
THE AUTHOR.

"THE PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH HISTORY."

BY THE REV. DAVID D. VAN ANTWERP, A.M.

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P R E F A C E.

THE author of the following History has thought for years that there was need of such a work. There is no approved History of the Church, of which he has any knowledge, adapted to the capacity of the young. Among the many histories prepared for the instruction of the young in the schools of our country, he has seen none of the Church which, in his opinion, is well adapted to the purpose. In our Sunday-school libraries, where is found such a variety of choice reading fitted to their capacity, he has not found a Church History which in size and style has a corresponding adaptation. In the preparation of the following work, it has been his wish to meet these several wants. This has necessarily confined him to the *principles* of Church History. In its preparation, he has referred, for authority, to those works approved by the Bishops of the Church of which he is a minister. If he finds that this humble attempt

meets the want which he believes exists, it is his purpose to continue his labors until he has presented to the young a complete epitome of Church History, extending from the establishment of Christianity down to the present day.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE History of the Church of Christ should be deeply interesting to every believer in its Divine origin ; and, if properly written, it will prove so, not only to those of riper years, but also to the young. Its style should be simple and pleasing, that a child may understand and be interested in the facts related. The History of the Church need not, and should not be, a dry statement of leading facts and dates ; for then it would not be complete, and its study would be tedious to the most of readers. Its leading facts and dates should be enlivened by the proper use of events, circumstances, incidents, adventures, and occurrences, which are fitted to delight and encourage the reader, so that he shall not feel that he has undertaken to perform an unpleasant task. There are plenty of stirring, thrilling, painful, and happy events connected with the History of the Church to afford a charm to the style and narrative. And there are many circumstances, which take place outside of the Church, that exert a great influence upon it. These should be embraced in the history, to make it complete, and they may be used in such a manner as to delight the reader.

To whom should Church History be interesting ? How can it be made so to all ? How should it be written ? What events may be narrated ? Can matters outside the Church be introduced ? Why should they ?

The Church, like every other society, has its times of adversity, as well as prosperity ; its days of sorrow, as well as joy. But, unlike them, it never ceases to exist. It has been visible, active, and complete, in all its parts and offices, ever since it began, and it has the promise of the Lord, its Maker, that it shall endure while the world endures. These times of adversity and prosperity are influenced very much by external circumstances. The changeful course of human affairs affect it seriously. The death of princes, and other persons in power ; the support or opposition of those in authority ; the tide of war, and the disposition of the conqueror ; the rise and fall of nations ;—all have to do with the History of the Church, and retard or advance its growth. Especially, when it first began, it suffered greatly by these means ; for it has always had zealous and bitter enemies, as well as ardent friends, who have used every advantage in their power to crush and destroy it, and have seized the best times and means to accomplish their design. Especially in its early history its enemies were numerous and powerful. Many of them were learned, and the most of them extremely wicked and corrupt. Among these haters of Christ and his disciples, the heathen priests were, perhaps, the most cruel and deadly in their purpose and plans to destroy the Church. Their influence caused more Christian blood to flow than any other class. They used their learning, tact, genius, subtlety, and all their ability, with untiring zeal, to destroy every Christian from the face of the earth. To make their plans successful, they devised the most terrible instruments that the genius of wicked and

How does the Church resemble and how differ from other societies ? What circumstances affect the Church ? What of its enemies ? When did it suffer most in this way ? Who were its greatest enemies ? What means were used by them ?

cruel men could discover, and they used them, without mercy and in the most brutal manner. Nor were they satisfied with putting Christians to death by lingering tortures. They also tried to defame the doctrines of Christ by slander, abuse, and falsehood, so that it would appear contemptible in the opinion of mankind. They also inflamed the minds of those in authority with hatred towards the Church, and induced them to pass laws which would give them authority to vex, persecute, and kill all who were known to be followers of Christ. These external agents of cruelty compose a part of Church History, and though they cause us pain when we read of them, yet they add interest to the subject.

But there are many circumstances and events, connected with the History of the Church, that are delightful to reflect upon. These may assist greatly in giving life to the narrative, and it is a privilege of which the historian should avail himself to make good use of them. The brightest examples of heroism, and the most brilliant displays of all that is great in man, are associated with the Church and compose a part of its history. It is delightful to read of illustrious princes who have stood forth as the patrons and defenders of the Faith, and by their laws, their bounty, their words, and their piety, have set an example worthy of imitation by their subjects. The history of wise and learned men who have adorned the Church by their illustrious and laborious works, will serve to inspire the reader and lead him on with right good-will. There have been hosts of such men, whose great and active minds have,

How did they assail the doctrines of Christ? To what other means did they resort? What resources has the historian to enliven his narrative? What is said of consecrated talent and heroism? What of illustrious Christian princes?

without fear, exerted their might in the defence of the Church against its enemies, and have come off victorious. They wrote many books in defence of the doctrines of Christ, and vindicated the practices of Christians nobly and with the spirit of true piety. Many of their works have been preserved to our time, which show how wise, prudent, and holy the writers were. It will prove a source of purest pleasure to consider what glorious victories were gained for the Church by those holy champions ; and that, too, over such a vast army of powerful and deadly enemies. It will also strengthen and confirm the faith of the Christian to read how the few brave hearts went forth to battle for the Church against such fearful odds,—having arrayed against them the hatred of powerful kings, nobles, magistrates, the common people, and laws made on purpose to destroy them ; and yet how God sustained them, and enabled them to triumph and extend the bounds of the Redeemer's kingdom.

But the Christian reader will feel a deep and most lively interest in studying the history of those blessed martyrs who at different times have laid down their lives for the cause of truth, as it is in Christ. He will admire that greatness of mind and goodness of heart which enabled them to give up every earthly honor, pleasure, and comfort ; to undergo every privation ; to be hunted like the wild beast, from den to den and cave to cave of the earth, where they had taken shelter from the pursuit of their enemies ; at last to give up their lives amidst the severest torments in the power of man to inflict, rather than deny their Lord and Saviour and vio-

What of the writers that have adorned the Church ? What of their works ? What of their victories won for the Church ? What effect will the study of the lives of the primitive Christians have on the reader ? How will the lives and deaths of martyrs affect him ? What kind of sufferings did they undergo ? Will these tend to produce pious emotions ?

late their conscience. While these examples of Christian fortitude serve to interest the reader, they will also be writing on his heart pious impressions and kindling afresh the flame of love, and opening more deeply the flow of gratitude to God for giving to the world such bright patterns of holy integrity, and for casting his lot in a happier age and place. All these events and circumstances the writer of this History will endeavor to use in such a manner and in such places as he believes will be proper, and will serve to enliven and make it interesting, especially to the young; and he is confident that a sufficient amount of such matter can be had, to afford the reader a relish for the study of dryer portions of the History.

In addition to these stimulants to the reader's mind, he will find another in the importance of the study of history, and especially that of the Church. Here he will see the characters, lives, and deaths of good and bad men placed side by side in a true and faithful light, from which he will be able to decide what one's life and reward he prefers. Here he will also see what the Church has always believed to be error, and can see when that error began, who was the author of it, and what induced him to give it birth and support. This will enable him to detect the error and escape the evil consequences of embracing it. Here he will learn about those differences of opinions concerning doctrines, which gave rise to long and bitter controversies, and which, in several instances, ended in such unchristian feelings, that different branches of the Church would, for a time, hold no communion with each other. And yet, the reader will here see that which is more sad still. He will

Does Church History need interesting incidents? What is said of the lives of good and bad men in contrast? What of error and its cause? What of its consequences?

behold the rise, progress, and increase of errors which at last produced a permanent separation of different branches of the Church, and greatly marred that beauty of unity which, in early time, it had possessed. This will give him painful, but very important knowledge. It will enable him to see where the truth lies, and will give him a clear understanding of the cause of the divided state of the Church. It will afford him a feeling of security amidst the many conflicting religious opinions which he could not feel if ignorant of a true knowledge of Church History. Here he will learn who have been rulers in the Church from the earliest times, and will find cause to love and venerate the memories of some, while upon others he will be compelled to look with sorrow and shame. So will he see what awful and heavy duties weigh upon these rulers. He will learn how to feel for them, sympathize with them, and pardon their erring steps on account of human frailty.

He will learn that the Church has always been governed by laws, and that these laws are of two kinds, human and Divine. Those that are Divine are composed of doctrines and precepts which are found in the Bible, and are, therefore, perfect, and cannot be altered. Those that are human, being imperfect, may be amended and improved. He will see how great regard has been paid to these laws at different times; how deeply those that are Divine have been venerated, and how greatly the human have been respected and observed. On the other hand, he will see at what times they have been abused and set at defiance; how those derived from God have been polluted, and those from

What caused the divided state of the Church? How will this study affect the faith of the reader? What does Church History tell of the rulers of the Church? What of their duties? How many kinds of laws govern the Church? How distinguished? How treated?

men changed for the worse. Also he will learn how offenders have been dealt with at different times, and in what manner, and to what extent the Church has used her powers of discipline upon such as have broken her laws. What is of greater consequence, he will here receive important instruction about the Scriptures of the New Testament; how soon after being written they were collected together; what the main external evidence is that they are genuine; how great reverence has always been given to them by Christians; and how carefully and with what holy veneration they have been preserved, and their doctrines explained and precepts observed. The history of the rites and ceremonies of the Church at different times and in different places, will prove an interesting subject to the Christian reader; and so will that of the liturgies which have been framed and used by the different branches of the Church. But the blessed sacraments of Christ's institution, and the times, places, and manner in which they were administered, occupy an important place. So the different orders, powers, and duties of the ministry, together with the esteem in which the laity have been held at different times, are subjects of great importance, and will command the attention of the reader. These various subjects that have been mentioned, compose the chief matter of Church History. The young reader can see how imperfect his knowledge must be if he does not make himself acquainted with this very important branch of history. In importance, as a study, it stands next to Holy Scripture.

What of offenders? What is said of the New Testament? What of the rites and ceremonies? What of the liturgies? What is said of the sacraments? What of the clergy and laity? How does Church History rank as a study?

It has been the object of the writer to prepare a history of the Church, especially adapted to the young. To accomplish this object, he has endeavored to arrange its facts, events, incidents, and occurrences in such order that no part shall be left without something to enliven the narrative and entertain the reader. At the same time they occupy their proper places in the history of the age in which they occurred. As the work must fail to accomplish the object intended unless written in a style that can be easily understood, he has tried to use simple and expressive language to convey the ideas. With an earnest desire to benefit the young as well as old, he has prepared and submits this History, which he devoutly prays may prove a blessing to the Church.

“Truth is the historian’s crown, and art
Squares it to stricter comeliness.”
“Sit at the feet of History—through night
Of ages the steps of virtue she shall trace.”

What has been the object of the writer of this history ?

PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE RISE OF THE CHURCH.

THE ascension of our Lord to heaven was an event which filled the hearts of the disciples with great joy. It fully assured them that they had not followed Christ in vain, but that He was all He had professed to be. It fully confirmed their faith in His ability and power to fulfil for them and the world, all the great and glorious things He had promised to do. Among these was the pledge, so consoling and delightful to their minds, that He would send them the blessed Comforter, who would guide them into all truth. With these happy reflections cheering their hearts, the disciples left the hallowed place where they saw the Lord ascend, and returned with great joy to Jerusalem. There they daily assembled in the temple, and sang and gave praise to God, while they awaited in full and lively expectation the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. As lamps trimmed and ready for the burning, they awaited the flame of the Divine Spirit to enable them to shed abroad those herald rays that should at length enlighten all the dark corners of the earth.

What effect had our Lord's ascension on His disciples? What pledge had He made them? What did they do after the ascension? For what did they wait at Jerusalem?

At this period of the Church's history there were one hundred and twenty followers of Christ, eminent for their piety, and devotion to their Lord and Master. Besides these, there were other disciples, more than five hundred of whom are said to have seen Him at one time, after His resurrection. But when we consider how many and great miracles He performed ; with what power and majesty He preached ; what great wonders marked His history ; what multitudes were constant witnesses of these miracles and wonders, and hearers of His precious words, we are amazed that so few believed on Him.

Though the number of zealous disciples, at the time of our Lord's ascension, was so small, yet they were happy, and their hearts were buoyant with hope. But in the midst of their rejoicing there was one sad reflection. One of the chosen twelve had committed suicide. Judas, overwhelmed with remorse because he had betrayed his Lord, instead of sharing their joy, had entered upon that life of future woe which is the awful penalty meted out to the self-murderer. To supply the place of him who had thus fallen, and fill up the number of the Apostles as Christ had fixed them, the eleven proceeded to elect another. They selected two from their number who were most eminent for their piety and faith, and who had been constant attendants on the ministry of Christ, and were witnesses of His resurrection. These were Barnabas and Matthias. Then, having devoutly prayed that God would direct them to the right choice, "they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the

What was the number of them ? What is said of the success of His ministry ? What effect had the ascension on the disciples ? What cause of sorrow had they ? What is said of Judas ? What did they do ? How did they elect another in his place ? On whom did the lot fall ?

eleven Apostles." Their number being now complete, as a valiant band, they awaited the summons of their Captain to enter upon a vigorous warfare against Satan and all his works. Nor did they wait long. About fifty days after the Ascension, their Lord fulfilled his promise, and showed to what great power and glory he had been exalted, by sending the Holy Ghost upon them. They were at once filled with the manifold gifts of God. Their minds were lit up with a new and marvellous flame. They were confirmed in the faith; made fearless of what man could do unto them; endowed with new and greater powers, and especially with the ability to speak all languages, which enabled their hearers, of every nation, to understand them. At the same time they were animated with a zeal which nothing earthly could extinguish or lessen. In His wisdom, God had ordered this great event to take place on the occasion of the Jewish festival of Pentecost. At this time there were many thousands of devout Jews assembled from all parts of the world at Jerusalem to attend the feast. This great multitude, being composed of different nations, spoke different languages. It was to this promiscuous throng the Apostles preached after they had received the gift of the Holy Ghost. They astonished their hearers with the boldness and power with which they proclaimed the Gospel of Christ, and especially with their gift of tongues. For "they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying, one to another, Behold, are not all these Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" The success which attended this first day's labor was indeed glorious. Three thousand of those

For what did they wait? How long? What was the effect of the spirit's descent? When did it take place? Of what was the multitude composed? What effect had their preaching?

devout Jews were converted to the faith of Christ and were baptized on the same day. From this good beginning, the work of conversion moved on successfully. In a short time, the men alone who had become Christians numbered five thousand, and among them were many Jewish priests.

At this time the Apostles ordained seven deacons. The necessity for this act arose from the fact that complaints were made that partiality was shown in the use of the common fund. At this early period of the Church's History its members held all their property in common, and distribution was made to all as they severally needed. The Grecian converts thought that partiality was shown by those who made this distribution, and that their widows did not receive as much as the Hebrew widows. To prevent any further complaint of this nature, seven men who were deemed best fitted to perform this office, were chosen from the disciples and ordained by the Apostles. In addition to this office of "serving tables," the deacons were empowered to preach and baptize.

Two of their number, St. Stephen and St. Philip, preached the Gospel with great power, and baptized those whom they converted. But St. Stephen, by his holy zeal and the wonders he performed, excited the envy and bitter hatred of the Jews. In their fury they seized him and hurried him before their council. Then by the aid of false witnesses, they endeavored to make some show of justice in their prosecution. But while they were thus cruelly engaged, they beheld a great wonder. They saw the face

How many were converted? Were there any Jewish priests among them? How many deacons were ordained? By whom? How was property held? What duties devolved on the deacons? Which of them were most noted? What happened to Stephen?

of their sainted prisoner suddenly brighten into the beauty and glory of an angel's face. He appeared like Moses when he descended from the mount, from the presence of the Lord. While looking steadfastly upward towards heaven, he beheld the glory of God, and Jesus standing on His right hand. As this inspiring vision opened to his gaze, he exclaimed in the presence of the council: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God!" This expression so inflamed his enemies, that they all ran to him at once, and having dragged him out of the city, they stoned him to death. Thus St. Stephen suffered death in witness of the truth of Christ, and has the honor of being the first Christian martyr. He suffered in the year of our Lord 34.

Who was the first martyr? Give an account of his death.

CHAPTER II.

LABORS AND PERSECUTION OF THE APOSTLES.

AFTER the ascension of our Lord, the Apostles confined their labors to the people of the Jews, for the space of about twelve years. In the mean while, Jerusalem was their centre of operations. Their labors were attended with great success. Having been instructed to preach the Gospel first to the Jews, they found Jerusalem well adapted to a beginning of their work. It was the heart of the Jewish Church, and every beating of that heart made a pulse in all parts of the body, even to its extremities. The conversion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost showed how well the position was chosen to promote their work. Among the number were devout Jews out of every nation. At the conclusion of the feast they returned to their homes, and carried with them the good seed, faith in a crucified and risen Saviour. Thus was the doctrine of the cross diffused world-wide by the labors of that one day.

Persecution also aided in scattering the seed of the Gospel among the nations. As the tempest, striking a bed of thistle-down, bears aloft the noxious seed and drops it in every field, garden, hedge, forest, and highway, far and

How long did the disciples labor among the Jews alone? What was the centre of their operations? What advantage had this position? What effect had persecution on the spread of the Gospel?

near, so persecution operated upon the doctrines of Christ, so odious to the Jews. The means which Satan employed to extinguish the infant life of the Church, resulted in its prosperity. St. Philip, driven by persecution, left Jerusalem and went to Samaria. He preached to the inhabitants, and they heard him gladly. Many were converted by his preaching, and he baptized them. When the Apostles heard of the happy results of his labors, they sent two of their number, St. Peter and St. John, to confirm them, who, when they had laid their hand upon them, received the Holy Ghost. Simon Magus, who professed to have been converted by the preaching of Philip, when he witnessed the miraculous gifts which the other disciples had received in the act of confirmation, offered the Apostles money if they would give him the same powers which they possessed. For this sin St. Peter severely rebuked him, saying, "Thy money perish with thee." In this act, Simon was the father of that evil which has infested the Church more or less in all ages, and which is called Simony, after his own name. He was likewise the leader of a heresy that became very popular, and greatly perplexed the Church, called the *Gnostic heresy*. From Samaria, St. Philip was directed by the Spirit to go southward, and on his way he converted and baptized the Ethiopian ruler. Thus another gospel message, powerfully sustained, was sent into Africa.

About this time, Saul, a learned, accomplished, and zealous Jew, was engaged with all his powers and energy in persecuting the followers of Christ. He had received au-

How did Satan defeat himself? What of St. Philip and his preaching? What can you say of Simon Magus? How was he rebuked? *Simony*, whence came this term? Of what sect was he the father? What of St. Philip? Saul, who was he?

thority from the chief priests of his nation to persecute all Christians, of whatever age or sex, he should find. He was on his way to Damascus to execute his bloody commission, when his career was stopped. While he was pressing on his way towards that lovely city, which was so soon to be the theatre of his cruel exertions, the Lord overwhelmed him with his glory and power. He fell, amazed, to the earth. So bright and dazzling was this glory that it deprived him of his sight. As he lay prostrate on the ground, he heard that pathetic appeal which proved to him the greatest of blessings: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" At once and earnestly he asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" And the reply was sufficient to establish his faith: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Then his will was subdued to that of Christ, and he inquired, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The conversion of this great man was timely and of the greatest advantage to the Church. He had been educated in one of the best schools of his country. This enabled him to defend the faith of Christ with success against the reproaches and assaults of the Jewish doctors and heathen philosophers. He had great natural powers, and to these were added, when he became a Christian, the power of working miracles. He was prudent, patient, courageous, and persevering, and he devoted every ability he possessed to the work of his Divine Master. He labored to redeem the time he had lost in worse than idleness, and to make amends for the crime of which he had been guilty, of persecuting the Church. His Hebrew name was Saul, his Roman name

What was his character? In what was he engaged? Give an account of his conversion. What can you say of his education? What advantage did this give him? What of his other qualifications? What is said of his name?

Paul, and by this he was generally called. He made the thirteenth Apostle. This happy event occurred A. D. 35.

For a time, persecution now ceased, and the Church had rest. This lull in the storm was owing to the conversion of Saul, its master-spirit, and the disposition of Caligula, the Roman emperor.

The state of the Church was now most interesting. It increased rapidly in numbers, and charity shone brightly, while its fruits of brotherly love, peace, and harmony abounded. Persecution served to purify it, and knit together the hearts of the faithful into close union by a holy sympathy. Zealous for the cause in which they were engaged, and eager for the mighty work before them, the disciples went all abroad proclaiming the news of salvation through Christ.

But before the blessed Apostles separated, and departed to fulfil their great commission of preaching the Gospel to all nations, they elected one from their number to be bishop of Jerusalem. St. James, one of the Lord's brethren, was chosen to fill this office. He was surnamed the Just, on account of his Christian virtue and holy life. St. Clement says the Lord had imparted to him the gift of knowledge. Jerusalem was therefore the first See, and St. James the Just its first bishop.

The great success which followed the ministry of the disciples arose from those wonderful powers which they possessed to fasten conviction in the mind through the mighty miracles which they performed, their prophetic power, their discerning the thoughts and intents of the

In what year was he converted? What circumstances put an end to persecution? What was now the state of the Church? Who was first bishop of Jerusalem? What is said of St. James? What says St. Clement? What was the cause of the disciples' great success?

heart, their contempt of riches and worldly honors, their patience under the severest trials, and their lives, which were free from guile, and were spent in the practice of all virtues. Such rich and powerful abilities, moved upon by a prudent and holy zeal, served to extend the Church rapidly. These means of success were greatly increased by the power which the Apostles had of conferring their gifts upon others.

But all these things combined, served to inflame afresh the envy and hatred of the Jews, and they renewed the persecution which, upon the conversion of Saul, they had suspended. James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John, was beheaded. As he was led to the place of execution, the man who conducted him was so deeply moved by his holy conduct and fidelity to Christ, that he was converted to the faith, and asked pardon of the blessed martyr for the harm he had intended to do him. St. James forgave him with delight, saying, "Peace be to thee," and kissed him. They both suffered death at the same time. The Jews, meanwhile, at Jerusalem, sent to those of their nation in other places, to follow their example and persecute the followers of Christ wherever they could be found. To inflame them the more, they published false reports, which they intended should make every Christian odious in the eyes of their brethren. For this continued wickedness and cruelty of the nation that had shed the blood of their Lord and Messiah, a dreadful destruction was preparing, as a long-deserved judgment. Already the storm of vengeance began to fall. It came like the few drops

What use did they make of their supernatural gifts? What effect had these things on the Jews? What befell James, the son of Zebedee? What were the circumstances of his death? What did the Jews at Jerusalem do? What of God's vengeance upon them?

which descend from the herald clouds that fly before the desolating tempest. A great sedition and disturbance occurred on the occasion of a Passover at Jerusalem, in which it is said as many as thirty thousand Jews lost their lives. The city of Jerusalem was also scourged by a band of desperate murderers and robbers, who carried concealed weapons, and stabbed and robbed those of their own nation in the streets at midday. They spread fear and dread through the city. Pilate, also, who had been their base instrument in the murder of Christ, was brought to such straits that he put an end to his own life. But in spite of the enemies of the cross, the followers of Christ rapidly increased.

What befell them at their Passover? What scourge afflicted their city? What was the end of Pilate? Did truth prevail?

CHAPTER III.

THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THE GENTILES.

THE time having now arrived to preach the Gospel to the idolatrous Gentiles, St. Peter used the keys intrusted to him by his Lord, and opened the gates of the kingdom of Christ that all might enter. Being instructed in his work by the Spirit, he went to Cæsarea and taught Cornelius, a devout Roman centurion. While he was in the act of preaching to this Roman and his friends, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, as He had done before on the converted Jews. Then St. Peter baptized all his hearers that had received the gift of the Holy Ghost. The other Apostles followed his example. St. Jude preached at Edessa, in Mesopotamia. St. Mark travelled to the southwest, and preached to the Egyptians. Having established the Church at Alexandria, he left Annianus as his successor in the government of that see. The travels and labors of St. Paul, and the success which attended his ministry, are better known to us than those of the other Apostles. His career was brilliant, most active, dauntless, and attended by a succession of severest trials by land and sea. He chose Barnabas as his companion, who had formerly been his fellow-student under the famous doctor Gamaliel. The fame of Barnabas for piety and wisdom

What is said of St. Peter? What of his preaching? The mission of St. Jude? Of St. Mark? Where did he establish the Church? Whom did he leave as his successor? What of St. Paul's labors?

had placed him as a candidate for the apostleship beside Matthias. With this fit associate and helper, the great Apostle set out on his arduous mission. He first visited the cities of Asia Minor. He proceeded from Antioch to Seleucia, and from thence, by sea, to Attalia. He then visited and preached in Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. From Derbe he returned through the several cities he had just visited to Antioch, from whence he started. Here he gave an account to the Church of his journey, and its results. A dissension having arisen among the Christians in this place about circumcision, he and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to consult with the Apostles and elders about the matter. This council was held A. D. 49, and was the first ever held in the Church of Christ. It occurred before the death of St. James the Just, bishop of Jerusalem. He presided at the council, and after the other Apostles had expressed their several opinions on the subject, he gave his, which was adopted. This holy and honored Apostle was martyred in a brutal manner by the Jews. They threw him from a wing of the temple. The fall not having killed him, he arose and knelt, and prayed for his enemies in the words of Christ, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." While thus devoutly engaged in prayer for his enemies, they came upon him, and with stones and clubs beat him to death. Thus perished the first bishop of Jerusalem, a model in his life and death for all others. He was succeeded in his office by Simeon, a cousin of the Lord.

What of Barnabas? Where did he preach on his first journey? To what city did he return? What dissension arose? Its cause? How was it settled? When and where was the first council? Who presided? How did he suffer? Who succeeded St. James?

When St. James had announced the decree of the council relative to circumcision, St. Paul and St. Barnabas returned to the Church in Antioch, and made known the result. After remaining there some time, St. Paul proposed to Barnabas to commence another visitation of the churches in Asia Minor. But an unpleasant circumstance separated these well-tried and faithful friends. This occurred in consequence of the urgent wish of Barnabas, that his relation Mark might be their companion. To this arrangement St. Paul expressed a decided objection. For Mark had travelled with them on a former occasion and had been of no advantage to them, but rather a hindrance to their work. He had consulted his own ease and safety too much to please the ardent and intrepid Apostle; and on one occasion had left them at Pamphylia, in the midst of their journey. His opposition to the measure was so determined, and the desire of St. Barnabas that he should go, so ardent, that these attached friends separated, and entered upon different fields of labor. In this way a little matter resulted in separating those beloved companions who had labored together in the ministry most harmoniously for nearly fourteen years. Thus we see how weak men are in their greatest strength: how fallible, even though inspired. But it resulted well for the Church, in the end. It aroused Mark into vigorous action, and he toiled nobly afterwards, in the cause of his Redeemer. He gave St. Paul occasion to speak well of his conduct as a good soldier and servant of Christ. It was about this time that St. Peter visited Antioch. This visit probably oc-

Where did St. Paul and Barnabas go after the council? What caused their separation? What was St. Paul's objection to Mark? What lesson does this circumstance teach? What was the result to the Church and Mark? What is said of St. Peter at Antioch?

curred soon after the adjournment of the council at Jerusalem. Its object is not known. At that council, St. Peter had made the opening speech, and expressed himself in favor of St. Paul's course. He approved of placing all Christians on equality, whether Jew or Gentile. And such was the decree of the council. When he first arrived at Antioch he mingled freely with the Gentile Christians, and treated them as equals. But some Jewish Christians followed him to Antioch, who did not regard the decision of that council. They would not associate with the uncircumcised. Their conduct influenced St. Peter, and he began to vacillate. As he had once declared himself ready to follow Christ, even to death, but had denied him in his darkest hour, through fear of a maid-servant, so now he was intimidated by these Judaizers. In the face of what he had said in the council, and its decree, he withdrew from the society of the Gentile Christians, influenced Barnabas and others to follow his example, and endangered the peace and unity of the Church. This conduct excited the indignation of St. Paul. He rebuked him "before all," and "withstood him to the face." No doubt the rebuke was merited, and produced sincere regret in the mind of St. Peter, as he had wept before at his cowardice and sin in denying his Lord. He afterwards spoke of St. Paul as "our beloved brother."

Barnabas having separated from St. Paul, chose his young relative and friend, Mark, as his future companion. They went to the island of Cyprus, and there entered on their missionary work. In the year A. D. 50, St. Paul began his second missionary journey. He chose Silas as his

What of his conduct there? How did he treat the Gentile Christians? What evils resulted from his conduct? Who rebuked him? What did Barnabas do?

companion, and revisited the cities and towns where he had preached on his first journey. At Iconium he received Timothy as a second companion, who filled the place of Mark on his first journey, as Silas did that of Barnabas. With his two companions, he proceeded westward in his journey till he arrived at Troas. He had followed the guiding of the Spirit of God to this place. While awaiting here the further instruction of the Spirit, he saw in a vision of the night a man standing by his side. He appeared to be a messenger come from a distance, and wore the garb of a Macedonian. This man said to him, "Come over and help us." It was an eventful night to the Apostle and to the Church. He made arrangement for immediate departure on his journey. Before he left Troas he added a third to his travelling companions. This was "Luke, the beloved physician," whose medical care he probably needed, because of the poorness of his health. The same companion also performed the office of historian of his travels, labors, and the circumstances and events that attended them. In the morning after he had seen the vision, he sailed with his companions for Macedonia. Here he visited and preached in Samothrace, Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, and Berea. At the last of these towns he left Silas and Timothy. With Luke he proceeded to Athens, and preached to the philosophers and students, who made the city a most renowned seat of learning. In the year of our Lord 51, he was in Athens. From thence he went to Corinth, where Silas and Timothy joined

When did St. Paul begin his second journey? Who was his companion? What other companions did he choose? What of his vision at Troas? What was Luke's profession? What services did he perform? Where did St. Paul go from Troas? What other places did he visit? Give an account of his labors.

him. Here he remained and labored for many months. It was some time in A. D. 52 that he left Corinth and went to Cenchrea, the harbor of Corinth. The time had come when he deemed it right to leave Greece and once more visit Jerusalem. He wished to be present with the Jews, when they assembled in large numbers on the occasion of one of their festivals. From Cenchrea he sailed to Ephesus. Remaining a few days at this city, the Apostle improved his time in discussing the claims of Christianity with his Jewish fellow-countrymen. They expressed an earnest wish that he would remain with them. This he was unable to do, as the ship was on its way to Syria, and it would probably be his only opportunity of reaching Jerusalem in season for the approaching festival. And yet it is probably that he failed to reach the city in season. St. Luke gives us no account of any events having transpired while there. It is probable he merely saluted the Church in that mother of cities and returned to Antioch.

What induced him to leave Greece? From what port did he sail? Did he reach Jerusalem in time?

CHAPTER IV.

ST. PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY AND HIS DEATH.

ON his third journey the companions of St. Paul were Timothy and Luke, and, possibly, Titus. The Apostle, with his companions, left Antioch in A. D. 55. He directed his course towards Ephesus. On his way he paid a hasty visit to the churches in Galatia and Phrygia. While visiting these churches Apollos came to Ephesus. He was a native of Alexandria, in Egypt, and had been educated in its famous schools. He had the reputation of being an accomplished orator and an able expounder of the sacred Scriptures. This learned and eloquent Jew had become a disciple of John the Baptist, and received his baptism. He believed that the expected Messiah had come, and was as thoroughly instructed in the Gospel as a disciple of John could well be. Of the doctrines of Christ he had no knowledge; but with a spirit, power, and zeal worthy of a disciple of John, he was preparing the minds of men to receive those doctrines. With this intent he came and preached to the Ephesians. Here he met Aquila and Priscilla, converts of St. Paul, who were well and thoroughly instructed in the doctrines of Christ. They became deeply interested in Apollos, and imparted to him all the knowledge they had acquired of Christianity. They informed him of the miraculous gifts

Who were the companions of St. Paul on his third journey? When did he leave Antioch? What course did he go? Who was Apollos? What baptism did he receive? What was his character as a preacher? Where did he preach? Whom did he meet there? Who were Aquila and Priscilla?

which followed upon the conversion of men and women to Christ. By this providential circumstance having become acquainted with the doctrines of Christ, he cordially embraced them, and devoted all his powers to their propagation. The Spirit moved him to go and preach the Gospel at Corinth—in a city where an Apostle had already preached and firmly established the Church. He was encouraged in the discharge of this duty by the Christians at Ephesus. He accordingly sailed for Greece, and, on his arrival at Corinth, he exerted all the powers of eloquence and learning he possessed, in persuading men to become Christians. His efforts were very successful. But the enemy of souls never loses an opportunity of sowing tares among the good seed of a field, however well cultivated. So here, evil results followed the faithful and successful labors of Apollos, which he had not anticipated and could not prevent. The accomplished Corinthians were great admirers of eloquence. While listening to Apollos they paid more regard to his oratory than to his doctrines. They admired the preacher rather than the truths he preached. They saw so great a contrast between his manner and the plain, blunt style of St. Paul, that they refused any longer to look up to St. Paul as their teacher, but called themselves after the name of Apollos. Others, on the contrary, were as zealously attached to St. Paul, as a teacher, and called themselves after his name. Thus divisions arose in the Corinthian Church.

While Apollos was preaching at Corinth, St. Paul arrived at Ephesus. Here he preached about three years;

What benefit did he receive from them? Where did he go from Ephesus? What success attended his labors at Corinth? What evil consequences resulted? What did the Corinthians most admire? How did his style differ from St. Paul?

established the Church, converted a great number to the faith, and ordained a number of presbyters to carry on the work he had begun. From Ephesus he sailed to Macedonia, and visited in course all the Churches he had established there and in Greece. Having finished the work he intended to do on his third journey, he again returned to Jerusalem in A. D. 58. While at Jerusalem he was seized by the Jews, who were resolved to put him to death. But he appealed to Cæsar, and so was rescued from their power. He was sent to Rome for trial in A. D. 60; and, on his arrival, was cheered to find Christian brethren there, glad to receive him. Here he remained a prisoner for two years; enjoying, in the mean while, much liberty, and constantly engaged in preaching the Gospel. But his enemies dared not prosecute him before the emperor. At length, being brought to trial before Nero, he was set at liberty. He then visited the Churches for the last time. At Ephesus he left Timothy to preside over the Church as bishop. From Ephesus he proceeded to the island of Crete, and appointed Titus to the apostolic office there, as he had Timothy at Ephesus. After this, passing through Macedonia again, he journeyed as far west as Spain, and probably the British isles. But now a dreadful storm gathered over the Church throughout the empire. Its great adversary, having failed to crush it by means of the hatred and cruelty of the Jews, brought in the heathen to their aid. The followers of Christ incurred the hatred of the heathen, because they despised their idol gods and exerted themselves to put an end to their worship, because they labored

Where was St. Paul at this time? How long did he preach at Ephesus? With what success? Where did he next go? How did the Jews treat him? To whom did he appeal? When did he arrive at Rome? How did he fare there? When set at liberty, where did he go?

successfully to convert the heathen to the faith of Christ, and because of the great simplicity of the Christian worship. The Church had no temples, no sacrifices, no images, and no oracles. The heathen priests were most bitter in their hatred; for their wickedness and the folly of their pretensions were exposed by the Apostles and their fellow-laborers. Their income was growing less, their influence was diminishing, and, unless a stop was put to the rapid spread of Christianity, they began to fear that their whole system would be overthrown and their power lost. At this time, a great fire broke out in Rome and consumed nearly half the city. Nero, the wicked emperor, was suspected of the crime of setting it on fire. To avert the storm, which he saw was ready to burst on his own head, he accused the hated Christians of the deed. Too ready were their enemies to favor the charge, and to encourage Nero in his intention to exterminate Christianity. Then followed one of the most atrocious persecutions on record. The emperor, with the power and delight of a monster, caused multitudes to be put to death in a manner most revolting and terrifying to humanity. Some he wrapped in material that would burn with great fury, and then set fire to them in the streets of Rome as night torches, and so they were consumed. Others he tied in sacks with living serpents, and cast them into the river. Some were thrown to wild beasts, and by them were torn to pieces and devoured. Others again were compelled to suffer the death of the cross. At this time, St. Paul was probably

How did Christians incur the hatred of the heathen? What did the Apostles expose? What effect did their preaching have on the heathen priests? Of what crime was Nero believed to be guilty? How did he evade the charge of burning Rome? On whom was the guilt laid? How did he persecute?

at a distance from Rome. But all Christians, wherever found, were considered accomplices. He was apprehended and sent to Rome, and there placed under severe restraint. He was not allowed, as during his first imprisonment, to preach to all who would assemble to hear him. Yet a few distinguished persons visited him, to whom he imparted the knowledge of the truth. Among these was Claudia, daughter of a British king. But very few of his brethren stood by him in this time of peril. As the disciples had forsaken their Lord in the hour of severest trial, so now St. Paul was left to struggle alone with his embittered foes. St. Luke, the beloved physician, ever faithful and true, stood by him to the last. But the great Apostle was satisfied that he was near the end of his pilgrimage. To this effect he wrote to his beloved son, Timothy: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." He was brought to trial and condemned. Being a Roman citizen, he escaped the cruel tortures and painful death inflicted on others. He was beheaded with a sword.

St. Peter is said to have suffered martyrdom about the same time and in the same city. The history of this Apostle is involved in much obscurity. His mission was to the Jews, as St. Paul's was to the Gentiles. By some he is believed to have preached in those countries mentioned

Where was St. Paul? What befell him? Did he enjoy his former liberty? Who was permitted to hear him? Who was Claudia? Who proved faithful to the last? What was the import of St. Paul's letter to Timothy? In what manner did he suffer? What other Apostle suffered at the same time? What is said of his history and mission?

in his first epistle, and at Babylon, in Mesopotamia. There were a multitude of Jews dwelling at Babylon in his day, and from there he seems to have written his first epistle. Others believe that by Babylon, Rome is to be understood; that the same motives induced him to call Rome by this name that influenced St. John in his Revelation. He is said to have suffered martyrdom at Rome, in A. D. 66. A beautiful legend tells us, that the same weakness which made him deny his Lord before a maid-servant, and which called forth the rebuke of St. Paul at Antioch, followed him to the last. It says, that, through fear of martyrdom, he was leaving Rome by the Appian Road, in the early dawn. Here he met his Lord, whom he had before so shamefully denied. He cast himself at his feet and asked him, "Whither goest thou, Lord?" To which the Lord replied, "I come again to be crucified." Hearing these words, he returned penitent and ashamed, and submitted to martyrdom. He was crucified with his head towards the earth, by his own request, because he felt himself unworthy to die in the manner of his Master. It is generally believed that all the Apostles suffered the martyr's death except St. John. The persecution under Nero lasted four years. It closed with the wretched death of the tyrant. He was driven from his throne and condemned to death. Having attempted to take his own life and failed, he persuaded one of his servants who attended him to do it for him. Thus he proved the truth of Scripture, "The bloody and deceitful man shall not live out half his days."

Where did he preach? What is said of Babylon? What variety in opinion exists? When did he suffer? What beautiful legend is told of him in his last trial? In what manner did he suffer? Did all the Apostles suffer martyrdom? How long did the persecution last? What was the end of Nero?

CHAPTER V.

GIFTS, OFFICES, AND DIVISIONS OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

THE most remarkable feature of the apostolic age was the supernatural gifts bestowed upon the disciples of Christ. God gave them power, in the name of Christ, to change the usual operations of the laws of nature. The exercise of this power is called the working of miracles. This power was not only exercised by the Apostles, presbyters, and deacons, but by other Christians also. None could do miracles, however, who did not possess that gift of *faith* which was extraordinary in its character. This faith consisted in an intense belief that every obstacle must give way before the power it invoked; that if exerted in moving a mountain to the depth of the sea, the mountain would obey. It was a wonder-working faith, and a gift peculiar to the apostolic age. When God withdrew it, the age of miracles ceased. But it produced, besides miracles, other wonderful results. By means of the *gift of tongues*, the Apostles were enabled to be understood, on the day of Pentecost, by all the Jews assembled at Jerusalem from all parts of the world. This gift did not consist in a knowledge of foreign languages. It was the result of that *faith*, which was brought into exercise from a desire that all

What was most remarkable in the apostolic age? What supernatural gifts did God bestow? Who used this power? What is said of extraordinary faith? What other gifts besides miracles did this faith produce? What was the gift of tongues?

mankind should understand the doctrines they preached. It is probable they had no knowledge of the meaning of the words they used. The Spirit put the words in their mouths, and they uttered them. No one could understand what they said except the persons from that foreign country to whom the Spirit conveyed instruction.

The gift of *prophecy* was widely diffused among the members of the Church. It enabled those who possessed it to utter warnings, exhortations, encouragements, or rebuke with the authority of inspiration. It enabled them, with supernatural power, to teach and enforce the doctrines of Christianity. By it some were also enabled to foretell future events. This gift was of the greatest practical advantage to the Church in its rise. It was a very successful instrument in the conversion of unbelievers and in restraining the excesses of the brethren. The divine energy and power it gave the manner and words of those to whom it was imparted, inspired awe and reverence in the hearer.

The ministers of the Church were, from the beginning, divided into three orders. These orders were divinely appointed, and, therefore, all that is essential to them has been always retained. But a change has taken place in the names by which they were at first called. To the time of St. Paul's death, the chief officers in the Church were called Apostles. Their spiritual powers were more numerous, and some of these powers were superior to those of the inferior clergy. They preached and administered the sacraments. They held the keys of the kingdom of Christ.

Did the Apostles understand what they spoke? Who understood them? What was the gift of prophecy? What did it enable them to do? What advantage to the Church? Into how many orders were the ministers divided? How appointed? What change took place? What were the spiritual powers of the Apostles? What duties devolved on them?

And “they that have the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” says Hooker, “are thereby signified to be the stewards of the house of God, under whom they guide, command, judge, and correct the family.” They were set apart to the office of the ministry as was Christ, and by him they were empowered to bind or loose the members of his Church. To them only was given authority to ordain others, both to their own order and to the inferior orders. They alone confirmed, presided in councils, and declared the decrees and sentiments of the councils. They had rule over the inferior orders, and over the Churches which they founded. They were on equality among themselves, as an order of the ministry, in spiritual power, dignity, and authority. Besides these, they had extraordinary and temporary powers. They had absolute power to govern the Church. All their teaching was inspired. They were empowered to bind or loose the sins of men, which office their supernatural gifts enabled them to perform with justice. Their labors were not confined to a see or diocese, as has been the case with bishops since their day. They went east, west, north, and south, bearing the glad tidings of salvation through the merits of Christ, and each governed the Churches which he founded.

The ministers, next to the Apostles in position and power in the Church, were called bishops, or overseers; presbyters, or elders. They were to be men of correct Christian lives, prudent, “apt to teach,” and called of the Holy Ghost to the sacred office. They were examined and ordained

Who gave them power? Who only had power to ordain others? What other powers had they? Did they acknowledge any superior among themselves? What extraordinary and temporary powers had they? What was their field of labor? What names were given to the second order? What were the duties of presbyters?

by an Apostle : were empowered to preach ; to aid in ruling the Church ; to administer the sacraments ; to watch over and inspect the conduct of those placed under their spiritual charge ; and to sit in councils. From their number the Apostles chose one to rule over each of those smaller portions of the Church which were afterwards called sees or dioceses. They made them their successors in office, and conferred upon them all their own powers, save those that were extraordinary and temporary.

The third order of the ministry were called deacons. They were to be presented to an Apostle, and approved and ordained by him. It was their duty to receive and distribute the alms of the Church ; to preach, when occasion required it ; to baptize ; to aid in administering the holy communion ; and to attend on their presbyters at divine service. It would be gratifying to find, in the history of the Church, at least one period when there was perfect unity and peace. But this is impossible. From the beginning there have been strife and divisions in the Church. While the Apostles poured out the wine and broke the bread of that one body, there was a violation of this symbol of unity. The kiss of peace was too often but a veil that concealed warring hearts. St. Paul expressed his grief to the Corinthians that there were divisions among them. These divisions were apparent when they assembled for public worship. The earliest division that assumed the form of a sect, was made by Judaizing teachers. Their object was to turn the newly converted Christians into Jewish proselytes ; to

Who were chosen from this order ? What did they become ? What name was given to the third order ? What was their duty ? Was the Church ever at perfect peace and unity ? What is said of the violation of the symbol of unity ? What of the kiss of peace ? What does St. Paul say of the Corinthians ? What was the cause of the first sect ? What was the wish of Judaizers ?

make them a sect of the Jews. They would have them only differ from the Jews by the belief that the expected Messiah had already come, in the person of Jesus Christ. They insisted that it was the duty of all Christians to observe the law of Moses, and that the right of circumcision must be observed on the peril of the soul. The first council of the Christian Church was called to settle this controversy and heal the division it had made. By a decree of the council, the doctrine of this sect was condemned. Yet the Judaizing teachers persisted in their course and stoutly resisted the decree. They became a powerful party, and caused much bitterness and strife in the infant Church.

Another sect, which became vastly greater in number, power, influence, and durability than the Judaizers, had its birth in apostolic times. This was the "Gnostic heresy," of which Simon Magus was the father. They were fanatics, and the promoters of most dangerous errors. They denied the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead,—the great central truth of Christianity. They contended that all things were lawful for the wicked; that all outward acts were innocent, and adopted the worst precept of Atheism, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." They professed to have a deep and philosophic insight into the mysteries of religion, and introduced a "worship of angels." They are represented to have been engaged in "endless genealogies," in fanciful myths, concerning the origin and emanation of spiritual beings. This became one of the distinct principles of this heresy. They prac-

What did they enjoin on all Christians? What was the object of the first council? What did it decree? What effect did it have? What other sect is mentioned? Who was its father? What did they deny? What abominations did they consider lawful? What did they believe? What acts did they practice? What indulgences did they allow?

tised the arts of magic and witchcraft, and taught that indulgence in idol feasts and sensual impurities was proper. With all these abominations they encouraged disobedience to law and government, and resisted the lawful authority of their rulers. In this way they became the promoters of anarchy in politics. This party rapidly increased in numbers, and soon outnumbered the Judaizers. As two deadly serpents, each eager to seize and devour an infant, unite their folds in crushing its tender frame, so did these two sects, as agents of the evil one, exert themselves to crush out the life of the infant Church. Yet these were not the only forms of error—not the only cause of division. They were only the more formidable ones. There were other forms, with which the Church had to contend, at this early period: showing that it was militant from the first; that God never forces any generation of men into virtue, unity, and peace, nor renders heresy impossible. And so He teaches us that while He desires His Church on earth to be “without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing,” we cannot reasonably expect to see it such until it is triumphant.

Did they encourage obedience to law? What can you say of their increase? What illustration is given? Were these the only systems of error? What does God desire of His Church? Can we expect it to be so?

CHAPTER VI.

THE IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES, SACRAMENTS, ETC.

In a previous chapter it was observed that Jerusalem was the first see, and St. James the Just its bishop. In the year of our Lord 62, he suffered martyrdom, and was succeeded by Simeon, cousin of Christ. It has been also stated that the Church in Africa was first established by St. Mark, at Alexandria, and that upon his departure he appointed Annianus bishop of that see. St. Peter and St. Paul are said to have united in establishing the sees of Antioch and Rome, and in appointing their first bishops. Over the former they appointed Euodius, whose successor was the celebrated martyr, Ignatius. Linus has the honor of being the first bishop of Rome. He is mentioned by St. Paul, in his epistle to Timothy, written from Rome, saying, "Eubulus, and Pudens, and *Linus*, and Claudia, salute thee." After he had held the office twelve years, he transferred it to Anacletus, in the second year of the reign of Titus. After it had been held by Anacletus the same length of time, Clement succeeded him. St. Paul speaks of Clement as his fellow-laborer, in his epistle to the Phi-

What was the first see? Who its bishop? When did he suffer? Who was his successor? Where was the African Church first established? By whom? Who was the first bishop at Alexandria? Who the first of Antioch and Rome? Where is Linus mentioned? How long did he hold the office? Who was his successor? When did Clement become bishop? What does St. Paul say of Clement?

lippians, saying, “With Clement and the rest of my fellow-laborers, whose names are written in heaven.” The same Apostle appointed Timothy bishop of Ephesus, where were many presbyters. Titus he made bishop of Crete, a large island in the Mediterranean, now called Candia, which once was extremely populous, having, says Homer, a hundred cities.

There is no reliable evidence that either St. Peter or St. Paul was ever a settled bishop of a see or diocese. By the extraordinary powers with which they were endowed, and a peculiar Divine mission, it was made their duty to perform the office of bishops at large. Each one visited and governed the Churches which he established, and was the overseer of them all. And among the labors enumerated by St. Paul, which he had to perform, he mentions “his care of all the Churches.”

Though the Apostles possessed such superior powers of government, they, by no means, used their power in a despotic way. Aided by inspiration, in the use of their office, they were models for their successors. The presbyters shared with them their power to administer the sacraments; to preach; to conduct the public worship of the Church; to have a voice in its councils, and a vote in the choice of its officers; to even take part with them in the ordination of men to their own order. The deacons were empowered to baptize; to preach; to assist in other church offices. Their office particularly fitted them for going about and doing good, “as angels and prophets.” The people,

Who were Timothy and Titus? What of St. Peter and St. Paul? What was the extent of St. Paul's care? What kind of government did they exercise? What share had the presbyters in ministry and government? What power had the deacons? What share had the people in Church government?

too, were encouraged in taking an active part in conducting the affairs of the Church. They were present at its councils; their names were associated with Apostles and elders in issuing decrees. In the choice of ministers they had a voice, and they were at liberty to give of their substance as they saw fit. In common and in public worship they performed an important office; and even in acts of Church discipline they were encouraged in taking part. Thus, from the beginning, it has been ordered and established that important and responsible duties devolve upon each order of the ministry and upon the laity. As, in the solar system, each primary planet revolves around its sun and centre, and each secondary planet around its own superior planet, and yet none the less around the sun—all in beautiful order; so in the Church, the different orders of the ministry, with the laity—arranged in perfect order—revolve around its Head, and all contribute to reflect the glory of their Sun and Centre.

The kingdom of God on earth has always had a door of entrance through which man must enter to become its citizen. This was as truly the case when that kingdom was confined to the narrow limits of the nation of Jews, as when, under Christ, it became world-wide. Previous to the establishment of the Christian Church, that door of entrance was the right of circumcision, but under Christ it has been baptism. During the former part of this century, it was the practice to baptize upon the simple act of professing faith in Christ and his doctrines. But a change took place, during the latter part of this century, in this respect.

Did they have a voice in acts of discipline? What illustration is given of the influence of all orders of Christians? What is said of a door of entrance to the Church? What was this door in the Jewish Church? What in the Christian? What was required of the candidate for baptism?

Then, before baptism, the adult converts were carefully taught all the essential principles of the Christian religion, and while in this state of preparation they were called Catechumens. Nor were the children of Christian parents and guardians neglected. They were baptized and became the lambs of the fold, while the greatest pains were taken to instruct them in the sacred Scriptures and doctrines of our holy religion. They were not only taught these principles at home, but the best-qualified teachers were employed to aid in their instruction. To aid this work of religious instruction, schools were established in many places, while the most honored and holy men in the Church set the example of building them up. St. Mark founded a school at Alexandria; St. John established one at Ephesus, and St. Polycarp, his pupil, erected another at Smyrna, of which city he was bishop. The prime object of these schools was to train up the young as intelligent and pious Christians. But they had no uniform symbol of faith, in the form of a creed, to guide them in their course of instruction. At this time there were a number of forms which expressed the same great and essential principles of faith that are contained in the Apostles' Creed. It is, therefore, probable that the Apostles' Creed was not composed by the Apostles; for if it had been, then the primitive Church would from the earliest times have used it as the one and only symbol of faith. Nor were the "Apostolic Canons" composed by them, but by councils held at different times before the first general council. In addition to these helps, the Church

What change took place? What is said of children? In what were they instructed? What is said of schools? Where were they erected? What was the prime object of these schools? What is said of creeds? Was the Apostles' Creed composed by them? What of the "Apostolic Canons?" What is said of discipline?

was blessed with a prompt and prudent exercise of discipline, which contributed greatly to the preservation of its purity. Its rulers possessed the power and the right to exclude every member, who by his gross sins and immorality, brought reproach upon its sacred character. And, though it was necessary sometimes to deal severely with an erring brother, yet mercy attended the discipline, and a way was left open for reconciliation and a return to Church communion, through penitence and amendment of life.

The holy communion was very frequently administered to the faithful at this early period. It was considered a most precious privilege to partake of this blessed sacrament; and they delighted to honor their Lord and bless their souls by frequently calling to mind, in this way, his dreadful sufferings for our redemption and salvation. It was administered as often as each Lord's day. This day, the first of the week, had taken the place of the Jewish sabbath. The change of the seventh day of the week for that of the first, to be kept holy to the Lord, took place at the very beginning of the Christian Church. It was adopted by the Church at Jerusalem, which was the first and mother of all Churches, and the example was followed by all the rest of the Christian world. The Jewish Christians also kept the seventh day as a holy festival, and the practice was not opposed by the rest of the Church. Other sacred festivals were observed from the earliest times. Among the most important of these were Christmas, kept in honor of the birth of our Lord, on the 25th of Decem-

What of its exercise? Was it severe? What was the way to reconciliation? What can you say of the holy communion? How was it esteemed? How often administered? What is said of the Lord's day? By what Church was it adopted first? Which was the mother Church? What is said of Jewish Christians? What were the principal festivals?

ber; Easter, a festival that answers to the Jewish Pascha, or Passover, and so called by most nations, kept in honor of the resurrection of Christ; and Whitsunday, so called from the light shed upon the Apostles by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and chiefly because of the white garments worn upon that day by those who were about to be baptized, kept in honor of the advent of the Divine Comforter. The day called Ascension they likewise observed, in honor of our Lord's ascent to heaven. Besides these festivals, days were observed in honor of the saints, to perpetuate their memory, their holy lives, their godly deeds, and their pure and heavenly characters in life and in death. There were fasts, too, observed by Christians at this early period. The chief of these, and the one most carefully observed, was that held in honor of the sufferings and death of the Saviour. But as fasting was not established by the Church as binding on its members, and was therefore entirely voluntary, this fast was kept by some for only one day, by others for many days, and yet others observed it forty days. Fasting has always been considered a means of spiritual benefit, when practised to the proper extent and with a right mind.

Prescribed forms of prayer were used in the Christian Church at this early period of its history. There are several famous liturgies whose histories run back, for their origin, to the times of the Apostles. The liturgy of Jerusalem, or Antioch, is supposed to have had its source from St. James, bishop of Jerusalem. St. Mark's liturgy is so

What did they commemorate? What is said of Whitsunday? What of Ascension? What other festivals are mentioned? What was their object? What particular *fast* day is mentioned? Was fasting made binding? What is said of its benefits? What of prescribed forms of prayer? Were there *liturgies* at this time?

called because it is believed that it began with him. St. John's has its name for the same reason, and so has St. Peter's. They all agree in several important particulars, and give a sacred sanction to the use of prescribed forms of prayer in public worship.

Mention the several apostolic liturgies.

CHAPTER VII.

DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.—DISPERSION OF THE JEWS.

—ST. JOHN.

AFTER the death of the cruel Nero, the Church enjoyed, for several years, a good degree of rest from the bitter sorrows of persecution. Christians were thus allowed, in painful quiet, to behold the pouring out of God's awful judgments upon his wicked people, the Jews. Christ's fearful prediction concerning the destruction of Jerusalem was about to be fulfilled. The cause of that lamentation and those tears of our Saviour over the devoted city and its inhabitants, was now about to be realized. The cup of their iniquity was full to overflowing. They had not only crucified Christ, their Messiah, and spurned his doctrines, but had bitterly persecuted his disciples, and with cruel hatred had become the willing instruments of Satan in attempting to utterly extinguish the name of Christian from the earth. To make their design successful, they had excited the jealousy and hatred of the heathen, and conspired with them to destroy the Church. And this they did while professing to loathe all idolaters. After God had suffered them to proceed so far in their wickedness, His forbearance ceased, and He brought upon them

What was the state of the Church after Nero's death? What painful sight was the Church to behold? What sins had the Jews been guilty of? To what means did they resort to destroy the Church? What did God do to them?

a flood of sorrows so overwhelming as to amaze the world. Titus, son of the emperor Vespasian, with his army, was the instrument employed to accomplish these judgments. He encamped around and laid siege to Jerusalem, driving the Jews to the most dreadful straits. They suffered horrors that make humanity shudder, and which pass the power of man to describe. Amidst the awful calamities that then befell this devoted city, there was one circumstance occurred of peculiar horror. Before Titus began the siege, a woman, distinguished for her rank and wealth, took refuge in the city, with a multitude of others. She had a little son, whom she loved with all the fondness and tenderness that warms the bosom of an affectionate mother. While the siege progressed, the inhabitants suffered the extremities of famine. In the mean while, robbers broke into her dwelling and forcibly took from her all the provisions they could find. This event deprived her of every resource for her support. She was driven to such extremities by the gnawings of hunger, that she tried to induce the robbers, who daily rushed into her house in quest of more food, to kill her. This they would not do. Then, in a state of madness caused by the cravings of hunger, she seized her little son, who was yet at her breast, and said to him, "Wretched child! in the midst of war, famine, and discord, why do I preserve thee? Our condition among the Romans, though we might live, would be slavery. But even the horrors of famine, and the cruelty of these robbers, come upon us before slavery. Come, be thou food for me, vengeance to these murderers, and a tale for men, the only one yet wanting to complete the miser-

What instrument did he use? Who was Titus? What of their punishment? Give an account of one example of the horrors of the siege. What did she request of the robbers? What awful deed did she perform?

ies of the Jews." As she said this, she killed her son and roasted him. When this deed was done, she devoured half the body, and covering over the other half, laid it away. It was not long before the robbers again rushed into the house, and smelling the roasted food, they threatened to kill her instantly if she did not present it to them. She replied that she had left a portion of it for them, and then uncovered the remains of her son. When they saw this awful sight, they were filled with amazement and alarm, and stood stupefied. She then invited them to eat; but if they were unwilling, she desired them to leave the food for her. Trembling, they withdrew from the wretched mother, and spread the alarm through the city. This is but one of a thousand incidents of horror that occurred during the siege and capture of Jerusalem. More than a million of Jews perished, and nearly a hundred thousand were taken prisoners and sold as slaves, or given to the fury of wild beasts to make sport for the conquerors. The city was levelled with the ground, and the remnants of the nation were scattered over the world, to be a hissing and byword among the nations. In this signal manner did the offended God visit upon them his just judgments, and so relieved the Church of their power to persecute. This memorable event occurred in the year of our Lord 70.

The rest which the Church then enjoyed was used to good advantage in consolidating and confirming its strength. An opportunity was offered of enlarging its means of defence and preparing for yet more desperate trials and glorious triumphs. Especially it afforded an opportunity

What took place after she had consumed a part of her child? What effect had the circumstance on the robbers? What number of Jews perished? How many were made prisoners? What became of the city? What of the nation? When did this occur? What use did the Church make of its year of rest?

to collect in a volume the sacred Scriptures of the New Testament. In the prosecution of this work, the four Gospels were first framed into a volume; and of these, the first three received the approval of St. John, the beloved disciple of our Lord. The fourth was written by himself. It is probable that he also gave his approval to the other books of the New Testament. There were many spurious narratives about Christ and his Apostles, then in circulation, and this fact rendered it a matter of the utmost importance that the proper persons should be employed to identify them. When the work was complete, the most laudable zeal was manifest, on the part of those members of the Church who had the ability, in placing in the hands of all Christians copies of both the Old and New Testament. At that time the sacred Scriptures were esteemed by the faithful more precious than any treasure of this world. They were diligently studied, and their truths treasured up in the memory with all the diligence that honey is stored in its cell by the bee. When the preacher expounded these truths the people listened with profoundest interest and pleasure. Their interest was doubtless increased by the manner in which they were uttered; for there was no effort made by the speaker to appear eloquent, after the fashion of heathen orators. They delivered the truth in a simple and direct manner, and being moved by the powerful influence of the Holy Ghost, and a glowing love and admiration of the sentiments they uttered, they confirmed the faith and delighted the hearts of believers, while they fastened conviction on the minds of unbelievers. After the death of St.

Which books of the New Testament were first put in a volume? What is said of St. John's approval? What of spurious works? What of the circulation of the Scriptures? How were they esteemed? What is said of the style of preaching? Its effect?

Paul, a change appears to have taken place in the name by which the chief officers of the Church were called. They were no longer called Apostles ; but St. John, in the book of Revelation, calls them angels. St. Clement, bishop of Rome, distinguishes the several orders in yet another way : he named them after the three orders in the Jewish Church. The chief officers he called high priests ; the next in order, priests ; and deacons, he called Levites ; while to all the other members of the Church he first gave the name of *laymen*, from the Greek word *laos*, meaning people in distinction from the clergy.

Upon the Lord's day, and other holy days, the laity presented their offerings for the support of the clergy and the poor, as they had been prospered. At first there were no church buildings, and public worship was performed in private houses, and other buildings, as convenience offered. But after a time this want was supplied by edifices set apart for this express purpose, where the books and necessary furniture for conducting the services of the Church were kept.

The practice, recommended by St. James, of calling for the elders of the Church, in case of sickness, to pray for and anoint the sick person with oil for his recovery, was continued through this century. It was a Jewish practice, and the prayer now being offered with miraculous faith, by Jewish Christians, was effectual in the cure of disease.

Distinguished fathers among the faithful, edified and blest the Church by their writings. St. Clement, of Rome, who had been the friend and companion of St. Paul, and who

What change took place in the name of Apostle ? What name did they now bear ? How did Clement distinguish the orders ? What is said of the offerings of the laity ? What of church buildings ? What were kept in churches ? What practice was recommended by St. James ?

had been ordained by him or St. Peter, or both, was the most distinguished Christian writer of the century, next to the Apostles. St. Ignatius, the disciple of St. John, and bishop of Antioch, also left a monument in his writings which will prove a valuable treasure to the Church to the latest ages.

The second general persecution occurred in A. D. 95. The emperor Domitian, who was its author, was moved to his cruel and wicked purpose through a vain fear which in some way possessed his mind, that he was in danger of losing his crown by means of some relative of Christ. But his persecution was of short duration. His suspicious mind and extremely cruel nature emboldened some desperate persons to conspire against him and slay him. The general fear and hatred he inspired was increased by the manner in which he treated the Roman senate. On one occasion he invited the senators to a feast in his palace. When they arrived he ordered them to be conducted to a gloomy hall under ground, dimly lighted with tapers, hung with black, and provided with coffins, one for each of his guests, whose name was inscribed on its lid. Soldiers then entered with drawn swords and threatened their lives. Then the emperor dismissed them, thinking he had played upon them a remarkably fine joke. Probably, in return for this treatment, the senate would not allow his dead body to be buried. There was as general rejoicing upon the event of his death, as there had been fear while he was living.

Among the martyrs who perished during this persecution, were Flavius Clemens, a man of great dignity and

What of St. Clement as a writer? Who was St. Ignatius? What of his writings? When did the second general persecution begin? What was the character of Domitian? How did he die? How did he treat the Roman senate? How did they treat his body? What effect had his death on the people?

high position in the State, and Domatilla, his niece. St. John became in will a martyr. He is said to have been thrown into a caldron of boiling oil, and, by a miracle, to have escaped unhurt. He was then banished to the island of Patmos, where he crowned the labors and events of his illustrious life by writing that wonderful book, entitled his Revelation. After the death of Domitian, he went to Ephesus, and there spent the remnant of his days. At this advanced period of his life, an affecting event is related to have occurred, in which he was chief actor. On a certain occasion, while visiting one of the bishops of Asia, he saw a youth whose appearance was strikingly attractive and interesting. This youth he earnestly commended to the care of the bishop. His request was most cheerfully complied with, and the youth was educated with the greatest care, and baptized. But when the bishop had done thus much, thinking him thoroughly secured in the path of virtue, he relaxed much of his care. But the young man formed the acquaintance and society of bad companions, by whom he was led astray. He was so far decoyed from the way of truth and virtue, that he became a fearful outlaw and a leader of a band of robbers, exceeding them all in deeds of daring and wickedness. After the lapse of years, the venerable St. John once more visited the bishop to whom he had commended the youth, and made inquiries after him. The bishop replied, "He is dead. He is dead to God. He has turned out wicked and abandoned, and at last a robber." When the Apostle heard this, he tore his garment and beat his head in his distress. He then

What distinguished martyrs suffered? What is said of St. John? Where was he banished? What book did he write there? What incident is told of him? What became of his young favorite? What occurred after the lapse of years? What effect had the news on St. John?

hastened to the country where the robber and his band were. Without fear he approached the desperate robber. But when that abandoned young man saw the venerable servant of the Lord approach, he turned to flee. The Apostle, however, pursued him with all his strength, unmindful of his great age, and cried after him, saying, "Why dost thou fly, my son, from me? Fear not. Thou still hast hope of life. I will intercede with Christ for thee. Should it be necessary, I will cheerfully suffer death for thee, as Christ for us. I will give my life for thine. Stay! believe Christ hath sent me." When he heard these pathetic expressions, he stopped with downcast looks; then threw away his arms, and, trembling, bitterly wept. As St. John approached, he attempted to plead for himself. The blessed Apostle encouraged him with the hopes of pardon, and led him back to the fold of Christ, from whence he had strayed. Shortly after this event, the venerable Apostle died, at the advanced age of one hundred years.

What did the young man do when he saw him approaching? What was the result? At what age did the Apostle die?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH UNDER TRAJAN.—IGNATIUS.

IN the progress of our history, we have now arrived at the beginning of the second century. We find the Church enjoying a season of repose. The storm excited by the suspicions of Domitian, had passed away, and a refreshing calm succeeded. That supernatural energy which distinguished its history during the ministry of St. Paul, had given place to silent, but faithful and successful effort. The progress of the Gospel was gratifying. Trajan was at this time at the head of the Roman empire, which great temporal power exerted a mighty influence either for the prosperity or harm of the Church. This prince possessed many virtues. He was naturally kind and benevolent, and had much tenderness of heart. And yet he stained his life by some deeds of bloody violence. These acts of cruelty he was influenced to perform through means of the false charges and influence of the heathen priests, who improved every opportunity of persecuting Christians. As Trajan was a heathen, he was too ready to believe his idolatrous priests, and listen to their evil counsels. In this way he was induced to violate those kindly principles of humanity which he really possessed. This was especially the case near the close of his reign. After he had con-

What was the state of the Church at the beginning of the second century? Who was at the head of the Roman empire? What can you say of his character? What induced him to commit deeds of cruelty?

quered many nations, and restored much of the faded glory of the empire by a succession of brilliant victories over his enemies, he was induced to tarnish his glory by shedding the blood of his Christian subjects. He gave the credit of his triumphs to the power and favor of his gods. He was influenced to grant the request of his wicked advisers, who persuaded him that it was right to destroy Christians, because they despised the gods by whom he had won his great victories. Accordingly, he gave permission to do the cruel work their hearts so much desired. By this bloody license he tarnished those virtues that otherwise adorned his character.

In this persecution we have the record of the death of two illustrious martyrs. Simeon, the venerable bishop of Jerusalem, and successor of St. James, was crucified, and so followed the example of our blessed Saviour, through the agonies of a dreadful death. He was over a hundred years old when he suffered martyrdom. St. Ignatius, of whose writings we have already had occasion to speak, is supposed to have been one of those little children whom Christ embraced and blessed. He conversed familiarly with the Apostles, and during the persecution under Domitian barely escaped the martyr's death. At the time of Trajan's persecution he was bishop of Antioch. He had already earnestly wished and prayed that he might, if it were God's will, die the death of a martyr. He longed to wear the martyr's crown, and the desire of his heart was gratified. The Lord honored him with an answer to his prayer. When the emperor was on his way to subdue yet other enemies, he passed through the city of which St. Ignatius

What circumstance made him more violent? What effect have these bloody deeds on our opinion of him? What illustrious martyr suffered? His age? What can you say of Ignatius? What had been his wish?

was bishop. As was customary with the Roman emperors, in passing through Antioch, he stopped for a short time. During his stay there this sainted hero was brought before him by his enemies. Without the least reluctance or hesitation, the martyr submitted to be brought before the emperor. When asked whether he was a Christian, he frankly confessed he was, and boldly and plainly answered the other questions put to him by Trajan. He conducted himself in a manner so noble and dauntless, that the emperor considered it defiant and proceeded in haste to pronounce sentence, saying, "We command that he be carried, bound, by soldiers, to the great Rome, there to be thrown to the beasts, for the entertainment of the people." When this sentence was pronounced, the holy bishop cried out with joy, saying; "I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast vouchsafed to honor me with a perfect love towards Thee; and hast made me to be put into iron bonds with Thy Apostle Paul." They proceeded at once to execute the sentence, and carried him, bound, to Rome. There, on the greatest day of the heathen games—which were then celebrating—in the presence of a vast multitude of people, St. Ignatius met his fate with a dauntless spirit. Rejoicing at the prospect of his glorious death, and of being so soon relieved from the world and conveyed to the presence of his Lord, he was thrown to the furious beasts. They tore him in pieces and quickly devoured him, leaving nothing but the hardest bones. These were gathered up by his brethren and carried back to Antioch, and there preserved with great veneration. He suffered about the year of our

What occurred at Antioch? What inquiry was made? What answer given? How did he conduct himself? What did Trajan command? What was the martyr's expression? How did they put him to death? What did his brethren do?

Lord 107. The heroic death of these martyrs had a good effect on the mind of Trajan. It made him relent and regret the indulgence he had granted the priests. This regret was increased by a letter from Pliny, called the Younger, telling him of the character of Christians and their doctrines. This excellent man was wise, merciful, and prudent. He had won the confidence of the emperor, and obtained his especial favor. In reward for his virtues, he had been appointed governor of Bithynia, an important province of the empire in Asia. His observation of the Christian character led him to form a favorable opinion of them. He informed Trajan that Christians were dutiful subjects, who violated no law, neither were guilty of any crime; that they gave Christ divine honors as the Son of God; practised temperance in eating and drinking, and did not meddle with any thing that was forbidden by law. He also notified him that they were very numerous. The result of these influences was most favorable, and induced the emperor to put a stop to any further persecution. The triumphant death of these martyrs was the chief instrument of restoring peace to the Church, while it gave a most beautiful example to the unbelieving world how to suffer for Christ's sake. This is called the third persecution. At this period in the Church's history, we find the names of the several orders of the ministry permanently fixed. As early as the year 107, the grades of office in the Church were distinguished by the same names they bear at the present time. We have the witness of Ignatius, that when his epistles were written they were called by these names, and this holy martyr perished in the same year, or very

When did he suffer? What effect had the death of these martyrs? What is said of Pliny? What did he say of Christians? What effect had Pliny's statement? What is said of the names of the ministry?

soon after. St. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who escaped Trajan's persecution, bears witness to the same fact, in an epistle written about the same time. The change which took place in the name of the chief officers of the Church, is expressly stated by Theodoret, a learned and faithful bishop of Syria, in the first part of the fifth century. He says the names bishop and presbyter were at first applied to the same office, but afterwards the name bishop was confined to those only who held the office which the Apostles once held. The name Apostle was, through respect, left to those whom Christ personally commissioned as such, and a name which had been employed to distinguish those of an inferior order, was then used to supply its place. The name bishop was ever afterwards applied alone to that order of the ministry which had succeeded the Apostles in spiritual dignity and power.

At this early day the Church had made great progress. It had already been established in parts of Germany, Switzerland, Spain, and Britain, as well as in Africa, and various parts of Asia. In every direction it had extended its borders and was sustained. This rapid spread of the kingdom of our Lord was accomplished through the aid of the Holy Ghost, displayed in wonderful gifts and powers, which He bestowed upon the heralds of the cross. The multiplication of copies of the sacred Scriptures aided mightily in the blessed work. There were two great obstacles in the way of the Church's prosperity. One consisted in the false charges made against Christians by the heathen priests. These charges had a powerful influence on the mind of the em-

What does Theodoret say of the change? What name to the place of Apostle? In what countries was the Church now established? What means accomplished this work? What obstacles in the way of Church progress?

peror and the magistrates. But their falsity was detected and exposed. Trajan forbade any man making charges against them without signing his own name, as a witness to the charges. The worst things had been reported about Christians, and had caused them to undergo the greatest sufferings, while these reports were only gross slanders, put in circulation by their enemies through malice. But the able, candid, and benignant writings of the fathers were powerful in the defence of the truth, and contributed greatly in allaying the prejudice of those in power. The other obstacle which was then, and always has been, the most effectual weapon used by the great adversary to hinder the progress and mar the glory of the Church, was heresy, with its necessary consequent division. The sect of Judaizers had appeared at a very critical time. It was the first formidable evil with which the infant Church had to contend. But as it was the first to arise it was the first to decay. But its associate sect, the Gnostic, as it was later in birth, so it endured after the Judaizers had passed away. In the reign of Adrian, the successor of Trajan, it arrived to formidable proportions. The wisest men among the heathen had gained a great reputation for profound learning and wisdom, and it was an object of strong worldly ambition to win their fame. This sinful motive had found a fruitful soil in the minds of many in the Church. There were those who desired to win the vain glory of the world which these philosophers received. Influenced by this ambition, they attempted to obscure, with principles of heathen wisdom, the simple and lucid doctrines of the Christian

What did Trajan forbid? What kind of reports were circulated about Christians? What other great obstacle to Church prosperity is mentioned? What is said of the sect of Judaizers? What of the Gnostics? When did it reach great power? What vain ambition influenced them?

faith. They called themselves Gnostics because they professed to be able to restore a knowledge of the true God, which, they said, had been lost to the world. The principles of their belief we have already briefly considered ; it may be proper, at this stage in their history, to add :—They believed our souls were confined to our bodies by some wicked power, contrary to the will of God ; that Christ came to the world to rescue them from their prison ; that the world was created by one or two evil or imperfect beings, and not by God, as we are taught in the book of Genesis. They despised and rejected the Old Testament, and to show their contempt for it, they praised the serpent, the author of sin, for beguiling our first parents. They denied the resurrection of the body. They introduced the discussion of the important question whether Christians ought to make use of the peculiar manner of conveying ideas, and the mode of conducting an argument, adopted and practised by the learned heathen. This proved a perplexing question, and much bitterness was shown in discussing it. But finally it was agreed by the great majority that they might lawfully make use of these means in defending the Church against its enemies, and to increase its power and influence. Many of those who took sides in this controversy were doubtless actuated by the purest motives. They were seeking to promote the glory of God through the prosperity of the Church. Those of them who had drank from the fountain of human philosophy, were persuaded they had derived from that source a powerful instrument in the defence and propagation of Christianity. They were

Why called Gnostics ? What additional errors are mentioned ? How did they treat the Old Testament ? What perplexing question did they introduce ?

unwilling that the heathen should have the credit of being the only philosophers; that they should taunt them with the charge that their faith was opposed to philosophy and learning. They desired that, at least, the chiefs in the Christian army, the bishops and heads of the principal schools, should understand the use of these effective weapons, and be able to use them successfully against the enemies of the faith. Those who were opposed to this opinion, were apprehensive that the introduction of philosophy, as a study, into Christian schools, and the methods of argument used by the heathen sages and orators, would be destructive to the simplicity which adorns the Gospel, and rob the Church of that humility and piety which should adorn the lives of its members. They doubtless appealed to the example of the unlearned Apostles, and the success that attended their labors, in support of their position. At so early a period do we behold the beginnings of that conflict between faith and reason, religion and philosophy, piety and genius, which has disturbed the Christian world ever since. The Gnostics were divided into numerous sects, and the variety of their doctrines and opinions was as great as the number of their sects. The full record of these sects, and a complete statement of their various opinions, would require a volume of respectable size, while much of its contents would be too gross for perusal.

What decision was made upon the use of human learning? What is said of the honesty of those who discussed the question? What was the wish of some? What objections were offered to the introduction of philosophy? Of what conflict was this the beginning? Were the Gnostics united? What is said of their number and doctrines?

CHAPTER IX.

ADRIAN.—REVOLT OF THE JEWS.—SUCCESSION OF BISHOPS.
—HERESY.

ALREADY the Church had become a great power. It was represented in nearly all parts of the empire, and impressed the minds of reflecting heathen with the fact that it was no ordinary superstition. If it had been, they could have borne it. But there was a mystery in its progress which excited their alarm. They saw nothing attracting in its system. It had met with violent opposition from the popular religions of the world from its birth. It had passed through the furnace of affliction heated by three bitter persecutions. Its progress was made against political power, the popular will, the whole religious sense of the world ; and that too, without any remarkable display of genius, talent, or influence on the part of its members. “And yet,” says Tertullian, “men cry out that the State is beset, that the Christians are in the fields, in their forts, in their islands. They mourn, as for a loss, that every sex, age, condition, and now even every rank, is going over to this sect.”

Upon the death of Trajan, in the year of our Lord 117, Adrian became emperor. He was less mild in disposition than his predecessor. Yet he was not a cruel or wicked

What is said of the power of the Church? How did its mysterious progress affect the heathen? What obstacle did it surmount? What is the testimony of Tertullian? Who succeeded Trajan? When?

prince. He possessed a philosophic mind; and eminent talents and virtues. The period embracing his own reign, and that of his two immediate successors, is deemed the happiest in the history of the empire. In general, he ruled with justice and equity. But no sooner had he succeeded to power, than the heathen priests took occasion to violate the law of protection granted to Christians by Trajan. They began their work of death at the time of the public games. When great numbers of people were assembled, and excited by these amusements, the priests took occasion to inflame the minds of the crowd against Christians. As soon as their passions were by this means set on fire, they fell upon their innocent victims, and slaughtered multitudes without mercy. This sudden and violent persecution caused great commotion, and gave the body of the faithful cause to apprehend that one of the most fierce and fiery trials was now besetting them. This reckless destruction of human life, merely to gratify the jealousy and hatred of the priests and people, called forth an earnest and feeling address from Serenus, proconsul of Asia. He remonstrated against granting permission to the lawless multitude to practise such cruelty upon persons who had been proved guilty of no crime. This address, together with powerful and convincing apologies, written by two learned Christians, Quadratus and Aristides, had a happy effect. The emperor was induced by this means to renew the law of Trajan, which put a stop to the persecution. Thus were the enemies of the Church foiled in their wicked designs. This is called the fourth persecution.

What was his character? What of his reign? How did he rule? What did the priests do? When did they begin to persecute? What consequences followed? Who was Serenus? What did he do? What two Christian writers are named? What effect had their writings?

Christians themselves, however, were not entirely blameless in the midst of these calamities. There were fanatics, who, by their rashness and imprudence, inflamed the passions of their enemies. They showed an inconsiderate zeal in their desire to become martyrs. So great a multitude of them flocked to the tribunal of Arius Antoninus, during this persecution, desirous of becoming martyrs, that he was forced to drive them away, with an expression of contempt. "If life is so great a burden to you," said he, "you can find plenty of ropes with which to hang yourselves."

But the Jews had not yet stained their hands for the last time in the blood of Christians. Since the time they were so severely punished at the destruction of Jerusalem, they had remained comparatively quiet from molesting the followers of Christ. Dispersed and humbled by that awful calamity, they appeared to endure their punishment without making any further effort to restore themselves to their lost inheritance. But still, wherever they went, they were looking for their promised Messiah; they were waiting for the advent of another than Christ, who was indeed their Messiah, and whom they had rejected and crucified. They confidently believed their Messiah would yet come and relieve them of their toils and anxiety, and, gathering them together at Jerusalem, would once more restore to them all the power and glory they had possessed in their most prosperous days. Living in this state of expectation, and earnest longing, they were ready to receive the first indications of their Messiah's approach. This placed them

What indiscretion on the part of Christians? What expression did Arius Antoninus make? How had the Jews conducted since their dispersion? What was still their hope? For whom were they looking? What did they expect yet to enjoy?

in a position to be easily imposed upon, a base deceiver, availing himself of their anxious state, plunged them into the greatest misfortunes.

The name of this deceiver was Barcochbas. He professed to be the true Messiah, and promised the Jews that he would deliver them from the power of their enemies, and advance them to the possession of all the greatness and glory they were expecting. He drew his sword, and called upon all the Jews to rally to his standard, and hurl off the yoke which their oppressors had put upon them. His pretensions were believed by many of this wretched people, and great numbers flocked around him, and rose in rebellion against the Roman Government. Their presumptuous leader next called upon all Christians to join him, declaring that Christ Jesus was a deceiver; and because they would not regard his pretensions, he used his brief authority in cruelly persecuting all the followers of Christ he could reach. But his pretensions were quickly exposed, and he was punished in an exemplary manner. The army of Adrian met him at the head of his Jewish faction, defeated him, cut his army to pieces with a horrible slaughter, in which a vast number perished, and he among the rest. This terrible blow brought them so low that they never afterwards had sufficient power to persecute. To blot out all hope from their minds, and preserve the empire from being molested by them any more, Adrian built a new city on the ruins of Jerusalem, and called it *Ælia*. This new city no Jew was allowed to approach.

Who imposed upon them? What did he promise them? What did he do? Was he believed? What did he require of Christians? How did he treat them? What was the result when met by Adrian and his army? What did Adrian then do?

Up to this period, the see of Jerusalem had been filled by bishops of Hebrew stock. A rapid succession of fifteen had filled the episcopal chair when Jerusalem ceased to exist, and a new city occupied its site. As no Jew was permitted to approach it, the Church was composed of Gentile Christians, and Marcus became the first bishop of Ælia. The succession in the see of Rome and Alexandria was not so rapid. Evaristus succeeded Clement, and was followed by Alexander, who died in the third year of the reign of Adrian. Sixtus I. succeeded him, and was the sixth in the order of succession. Primus, the fourth bishop of Alexandria, died about the same time, and was succeeded by Justus. He was consecrated about A. D. 130.

The bishops were on a perfect equality in spiritual dignity and power, and were entirely independent of each other in the exercise of that power. They governed their respective sees or dioceses without the necessity of going beyond their bounds for instruction. They assembled their clergy from time to time, to deliberate upon the best means of promoting the welfare of the Church. They assigned to them their respective fields of labor, and ordained such as within their jurisdiction received holy orders. The bishop was elected to his office generally by the united consent and choice of both clergy and laity, and in some instances by the clergy alone. After his election, if the choice was approved, he was consecrated by bishops.

What name did he give to the new city? What is said of the bishops of Jerusalem? Who was the first bishop of Ælia? What of the bishops of Rome? What of the bishops of Alexandria? What is said of the authority of bishops? By whom were they elected? By whom consecrated?

Every age has been prolific of heresy. In primitive ages of the Church's history, we scarcely find the term of any emperor's reign expiring, without at least one new sect appearing on the stage. The reign of Adrian did not close until another heresy made its appearance. His severity towards the rebellious Jews who had risen under the impostor Barcochebas, in the destruction of so great a multitude of them, in the complete devastation of Jerusalem, and in the rigid laws against the survivors, induced Christians in Palestine to depart as far as possible from Jewish practices, and to give the least possible favor to the Jewish ritual. By pursuing this course, they gave great offence to many Jewish Christians, who cherished the highest veneration for Moses and the Levitical law. The result was, a number of Jewish Christians abandoned the Church, and formed a society by themselves. They began at Paræ, in Palestine, and practised all the rites and ceremonies of the law, and performed them with the customary pomp of the Jewish Church. They esteemed Moses equal with Christ in birth, as a lawgiver, and as a prophet of God. All the books of the New Testament which, in their opinion, relieved Christians from the necessity of observing the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish Church, they esteemed lightly. In consequence of their opinions, "they have received the name of *Ebionites*," says Eusebius. "For it is thus the Hebrews call a poor man."

But the Master-Builder had prepared for his Church a defence against every trial. There was a rule of faith

What is said of heresy in the early Church? What influence had Adrian's conduct on Christians? How did the conduct of Christians in Palestine affect the Jewish Christians? What did many do? Who were Ebionites? What their errors? What provision had the Head of the Church made?

simple, essential, and sufficient ; a uniform discipline and communion everywhere ; and a body of inspired writings adapted to every want of human life, which have within them the witness of their divine origin, and that defy imitation. The Captain of our salvation, foreseeing and anticipating every phase of error, even to the latest ages, made his Church impregnable at every point. Its enemies, in their attacks upon it, in every age and every form, have been invariably foiled, and their blows have recoiled upon themselves.

How defended His Church ? What of its enemies ?

CHAPTER X.

CELSUS.—SURPLICES.—WORSHIP TOWARDS THE EAST.—JUSTINE.—ANTONINUS PIUS.

THE power of Christianity was now felt in high places, and began to awaken sympathy and favor in the minds of the rulers in the land. The champions of heathenism became aware that it was making progress in spite of their cruel exertions to extinguish it. They found it necessary to use other weapons besides wild beasts, fire, and sword, if they were to destroy Christianity. They thought it worth their while to employ their pens in the work, and to these they resorted most vigorously. But in the use of this weapon, they dealt with their usual unfairness and wickedness. The first writer of note that assailed the Church was Celsus. His work was published in the reign of Adrian. He was a heathen philosopher, and most bitterly opposed to Christianity. As he resolved to strike a blow, such as would cause its complete overthrow, a plan was devised which he thought would be successful, and the best for the purpose. At this time there was a Christian secret society, supposed to have been founded by St. Clement, bishop of Rome. In this society were celebrated what were called the “Christian mysteries.” Celsus believed if he could

What can you say of the progress of Christianity? What did the heathen do? Who was Celsus? When did he write? What was his intention? What was his plan? What society is mentioned? By whom founded?

gain admission to this society, and witness all the "mysteries" practised there, it would enable him to assail Christianity to a much better advantage. He accordingly professed to be converted to the Christian faith, desired admission to this society, and was admitted. But he soon gave just cause for suspicion that he was not sincere, and the members of the order refused to promote him to all the mysteries. This greatly incensed him, and without further delay he began his work. He wrote against the Church with the utmost bitterness, regardless both of honor and truth. All his powers of learning and eloquence, and all the arts of logic he possessed, were exerted by him in his great design to make Christianity appear ridiculous and contemptible. He endeavored to prove that Christians were dangerous to the welfare of any country. Nor did he hesitate to use the grossest falsehoods in order to render their character and practices odious in the eyes of the world. He stated falsely the doctrines and teachings of the sacred Scriptures. He even assailed the spotless character of our divine Redeemer, and declared that Christianity was a system of religion which tended to pervert and corrupt the human race. But his giant effort had no more effect upon the Church, than the ocean wave that spends its fury upon the rock-bound shore, which recoils and flows back again into the deep. The wicked attempt recoiled upon the name and character of its author, and served to render him odious through all subsequent ages.

The custom of the Jewish priesthood, of wearing white

What was the object? What hypocrisy did he practise? Was it discovered? What then did he do? What did he endeavor to prove? To what means did he resort? What is said of his assault on Christ? What effect had his work?

garments while performing the duties of their office, was followed by the clergy of the Church. This was done, not from a desire to imitate the Jews, but from a sense of propriety. They thought the minister, while officiating, should be distinguished from the people by some appropriate dress. This opinion, which seems so natural, was placed beyond any doubt, in their minds, by the express command of God, requiring them to be worn by the priests who ministered before him. They could conceive of nothing more appropriate of which to make these garments, than pure white, for it was the emblem of purity, approved of heaven. In the book of the Revelation they read that "the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven last plagues, *clothed in pure and white linen.*" Of the Church they read, that "to her was given that she should be arrayed in *fine linen, clean and white,* for the *fine linen* is the righteousness of saints." And so—"The armies which were in heaven, followed him upon white horses, *clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*"

It was the practice of Christians at this early day, to worship towards the east. This practice prevailed among eastern nations before the advent of Christ. They supposed God had fixed his throne in that part of the heavens where the sun rose, and every day sent up that luminary above the earth to give light to its inhabitants. They had then no correct knowledge of the motions of the heavenly bodies, nor did they know that the earth was round, and performed diurnal revolutions. Hence they were led to worship towards the east, since they believed that God

What Jewish custom was adopted by the clergy of the Church? Why was this adopted? Why made of white linen? What Scripture authority sustains this custom? What is said of the practice of worshipping towards the east? For what reason? Where did they think God dwelt?

dwelt there, and of his great goodness sent the sun every day to bless mankind with its light. As the nations who had adopted this practice became converts to Christianity, they continued to worship towards the east, which, at least, was harmless in practice and reverential in manner.

Miracles and supernatural powers still continued in the Church, though they had greatly diminished, as they were less and less needed. They began to be withdrawn as the Church grew in the number of its members and in influence. The Lord dealt with His Church as the parent deals with his child. He leads him by the hand and sustains him, when he begins to walk, lest he fall, and become discouraged. But he gradually withdraws his sustaining hand as the strength of his child increases, until he finally permits him to walk alone. Christianity had now become so respectable a power, that good reasoning, though it came from Christians, often reached the minds and hearts of those in authority. This disposition to hear what Christians could say in their own defence, was greatly encouraged by the conversion of learned heathen to the faith of Christ. Of these learned converts, the one who was most celebrated at this time was Justin; called the martyr, from the manner of his death. He had been a heathen philosopher, and had studied the principles of the different sects of philosophers, in quest of truth. But after all his searching and labors, he found nothing to satisfy the earnest longing of his soul. He found no clear and satisfactory account of the perfection of God, nor could he learn what would be

What still continued in the Church? How did God deal with His children? What is said of the decrease of miraculous powers? What of the power of the Church? What added greatly to the popularity of Christianity? Give an account of Justin. What course did he pursue?

the state of the undying spirit when it left the body. Having searched in vain through all his heathen schools of learning, for a clear and satisfactory answer to these important inquiries, he turned his attention to Christianity. In this part of his search he was aided by a learned, prudent, and devout Christian. After a thorough examination of the sacred Scriptures, and the doctrines and institutions of the Church, he there found the object of his pursuit. All the longings of his soul were fully satisfied, and he embraced Christianity with a hearty good-will. Soon after this happy event, he showed his sincerity in the course he pursued, and the thorough knowledge he possessed of the true faith, by writing an Apology for his Christian brethren, addressed to the emperor, Antoninus Pius. This monarch succeeded Adrian in A. D. 138. He found the empire in a state of peace and great prosperity. Being averse to war, and the circumstances of the empire permitting him to indulge his love of peace, the affairs of the State flowed on in the same current of prosperity in which he found it, to the end of his reign, a term of twenty-three years. His love of wisdom, and the large amount he possessed of it, procured for him the admiration of all his subjects, and heathen tribes resorted to him to settle their differences. He had not long been in power, however, before his virtues were put in requisition to protect his Christian subjects. Their enemies had found a way to avoid the law of Adrian, which he had made for their protection. Under that law, no Christian could be prosecuted except for *crime*. But

Who aided him? Did Christianity meet his desires? How did he show his sincerity? To whom did he address his Apology? What is said of Antoninus Pius? What was the state of the empire? How long did he reign? Were Christians persecuted? How did the heathen manage to persecute?

now their faith was charged upon them as a crime. In this way they succeeded in afflicting Christians for a time. But the magistrates declared that such a charge was contrary to the spirit of the law. They would not admit that the act of holding the Christian faith was a crime. Being defeated at this point of attack, they devised another way to gratify their malice. They charged Christians with the practice of gross impiety, and with being Atheists. These were crimes which the State punished with death, and by falsely charging them upon Christians, they succeeded in destroying a number of them. This inhuman conduct called forth an able Apology from Justin, the martyr, in defence of the faith and practice of Christians. It had a happy effect upon those in power, and was followed by gratifying results. The emperor, to whom the Apology was addressed, then required the law of Adrian to be strictly enforced, as well in its spirit as in the letter. This put a stop to their work of death for a time. But it was of short duration; for soon after the reign of peace to the Church began, several earthquakes occurring in Asia, the superstitious multitude became alarmed at these fearful convulsions of the earth, and believed them to be evidence of the wrath of the gods. The anger of the gods was attributed to the indulgence granted to Christians. Influenced by this delusion, and impelled by hatred, their torrent of mingled fury and terror burst fearfully upon the faithful. But it was of short duration. As soon as the generous and kind-hearted emperor heard of these proceedings, he commanded that persecution should cease;

What crime did they charge on them? How was this crime regarded? What did Justin do? What effect had it on the emperor? What gave them the next pretext to persecute? How did the emperor proceed? Did he arrest the persecutors?

and that Christians might, in the future, be spared from these outrages, he ordered that every man who should afterwards accuse Christians, without being able to prove them guilty of crime, should be put to death. This severe law made informers extremely cautious how they accused Christians. This vigorous royal protection gave the able defenders of the Church, of whom there was a goodly number, a fair opportunity to spread the light of Revelation, and, by their writings, to contend successfully against Jews, heathen, and heretics.

How did the defenders of the Church improve the opportunity ?

CHAPTER XI.

METROPOLITAN.—COUNCILS.—MARCION.—EASTER.—MARCUS ANTONIUS, ETC.

ABOUT the middle of this century, the several sees and dioceses in a province began to unite in one large and harmonious union, as an ecclesiastical body. This was done for the purpose of deliberating upon the best means of promoting the general welfare of the Church in their provinces and dioceses. This practice began in Greece, and from there spread abroad, until at last it was adopted by the whole Church. These assemblies were generally held in the metropolis or chief town of the province. Through respect to the bishop of the city where they met, he was chosen to preside during their deliberations. Hence arose the title *Metropolitan*, applied to the bishop of the chief city. The name given to this assembly by the Greeks was *Synod*, by the Romans, *Council*.

About this time Marcion, a celebrated heretic, propagated his errors. He was the son of the bishop of Pontus, in Asia. Filled with a vain ambition, he went to Rome, and there sought to gain an office of distinction. But being defeated in his plans, his disappointment aroused in his heart such bitter and resentful feelings, that he sacri-

When did provincial councils begin? Where did the practice commence? What gave rise to the name *Metropolitan*? What name was given to this council by the Greeks? Who was Marcion?

ficed his union with the Church. He became the bold propagator of many gross errors. He taught that there were two inferior deities, the one perfectly good, the other perfectly evil. Between these two, there is yet another, partaking of both of their natures, and so having both good and evil principles. This evil deity has the power given him to bestow rewards and inflict punishments. By him, this our inferior world was created. He is perpetually at war with the perfectly evil deity; yet they both aspire, with a wicked ambition, to gain possession of the throne of the Almighty, and labor to bring all mankind under their control. He professed to believe that God, the Supreme, sent Christ to put an end to these conflicts, and to relieve the souls unjustly oppressed by their power. He also affirmed that this celestial messenger was empowered to subdue and destroy the authority of these two deities, and lead back the souls to God which they had led astray. Knowing this to be the mission of Christ, they joined in an effort to destroy him, and assailed him with the utmost fury, but without success. For, as he taught, Christ having only the shadow of a body, and not a real one, they could do him no harm, nor inflict upon him any sorrow. These, and other gross and fanciful errors, he published, mingling with the mass of folly a sufficient amount of Christianity to bring reproach upon the faith, and much harm to the Church. He labored to spread abroad these errors with untiring zeal, and succeeded in persuading a great number to embrace them. In such an evil work did the degenerate son of the bishop of Pontus enlist his

What were his errors? How many inferior deities had he? What was their character? In what did they join? How did Christ escape their malice? What effect had his heresy on Christianity? What is said of his zeal?

superior talents. But the might of truth was soon brought to bear upon his baseless fabric, and quickly demolished it. Justin Martyr wrote a work against his errors, and triumphantly exposed them.

Many of the trials of the Church, though their cause seemed small, yet they became great and serious. It has been one of the greatest sources of evil to the Church, that small differences of practice or opinion in its different branches, which were not essential, have been allowed to give rise to bitter controversy, jealousy, hatred, and an interruption of brotherly regard. Such was the case at the time of which we now write. The most important part of the Church was distinguished, by a natural division, into what was called the *eastern* and *western* Churches. The eastern Churches were those of Asia; the western, those of Europe. Between these important divisions occasionally arose points of difference in opinion or practice, that were not essential. Yet they sometimes resulted in serious difficulties. One of these trials seriously perplexed the Church during the reign of Antoninus Pius. It occurred in consequence of the difference in the time at which the festival of Easter was observed. The eastern Churches celebrated the passion of Christ on the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, which answers to our March. It took place at the same time the Jews celebrated their Passover. Three days after, they celebrated Easter. The western Churches observed the fast of our Saviour's passion on the night before the resurrection. Both east and west referred to what they considered good authority to

Who exposed his errors? With what success? What has caused the Church much trouble? What natural division existed in the Church? Which were eastern Churches? Which western? What difference existed about the observance of Easter?

sustain their practice. This difference gave rise to a bitter and prolonged controversy, followed by unfortunate results. In order to settle these differences, and heal the wound which they had occasioned, the venerable St. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, went to Rome and conferred with Anicetus, its bishop. But he failed in accomplishing the object of his mission, and was under the painful necessity of seeing this cause of difference still remain a subject of bitter strife, to agitate the Church and give occasion for the reproach of the heathen.

Antoninus Pius was succeeded by Marcus Aurelius Antonius, in A. D. 161. This new emperor was a heathen philosopher, and celebrated for his learning and brilliant qualities. He was a great friend of learning, and encouraged it in every way by his example. On account of these noble principles and virtues, he has been highly praised, and his name honored as one of the most glorious that adorn the pages of profane history. But he was too much under the influence of his brother philosophers, many of whom were the most unreasonable and bitter enemies of Christianity. By their false charges, they influenced him to perform acts which tarnish his fame and overshadow his glory. Yet he did not annul the laws which were passed by his predecessors in defence of Christians. And for a time after his accession, the Church enjoyed the happy peace which the amicable and worthy Antoninus Pius had secured for it, and left, at his death, in its possession. It was several years after he became emperor, that Marcus Antonius gave his permission that Christians should be persecuted, and thus

What did St. Polycarp do? What success attended his effort? Who succeeded Antoninus Pius? What was his character? By whom was he influenced? How was he induced to tarnish his fame? Did he permit the heathen to persecute immediately?

stained his name with the blood of the innocent. It is the more surprising that so wise and virtuous a prince should have allowed himself to be deceived by the slanderous charges of the haters of Christians, since they were among the most faithful of his subjects, and cheerfully did him good service. They composed part of his army, and helped him fight his battles and conquer his enemies. On one occasion, it is said, they preserved his army from total ruin, by securing divine assistance in a wonderful manner. It happened while he was engaged in war with some barbarous tribes that inhabited portions of the countries now called Austria and Hungary. His army was in a desert place, completely surrounded by the enemy. Entirely destitute of water, they had nearly perished of thirst. Their enemies were extremely cruel, and were exulting in the triumph which they now believed to be secure. They were eager for the slaughter of their fainting victims. To the Roman army there appeared no possibility of escape. They were in this alarming condition, drawn up in battle array, when a legion of Christian soldiers, called the Melitine, all together bowed upon their knees in sight of the enemy and the Romans, and called upon God for deliverance, through Jesus Christ, the Intercessor. No sooner had they prayed, than a copious shower of rain fell upon the army, abundant to satisfy their thirst. The shower was attended with continued and most vivid flashes of lightning, while thunderbolts, in terrific peals, darted from the clouds, in rapid succession, upon the enemy, destroying many of them. This wonderful and unexpected deliverance, and the dreadful scene attending it, carried terror

What is a just cause of surprise? In what way did Christians serve him? Give an account how they preserved his army. The miracle that destroyed and terrified the enemy.

and dismay among the barbarians, and saved the army from destruction. This event was considered by the Christians as a miraculous deliverance, sent in answer to their prayers.

It was in the early part of this emperor's reign that a few bold and zealous champions of the cross set out from Asia to establish the Church in portions of Europe now called France and Switzerland, where the Gospel had not yet been preached. The chiefs of this noble band were Pothinus and Irenæus. They labored with great success, and established the Church in the cities of Lyons and Vienne. Pothinus became the first bishop of these cities. The spirit of St. Paul continued to breathe through the Church, and many of the clergy were ready and willing to follow his example, though they were confident that bonds, imprisonments, and perhaps a cruel death, awaited them. They cheerfully obeyed the command of Christ, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Baptism was administered twice a year, on Easter and on Whitsunday. The bishop performed the office of baptizing, or appointed one of his presbyters to do it for him. But before receiving this sacrament, adults were carefully prepared for it by thorough instruction. When the time drew nigh that they were to be received into the Church, they gave themselves to fasting, to prayer, and to other pious exercises, in order that their hearts and minds might

Where did missionaries preach the Gospel? When? Who were the chiefs of these missionaries? What success attended their labors? What is said of Pothinus? What is said of the missionary spirit of the Church? What of baptism? By whom administered? What preparation was required of adults?

be in a proper frame to receive the great blessing which this holy sacrament would be the instrument of conferring upon them. God-parents stood for them, whose duty it was, in a particular manner, to aid in guiding and strengthening them, that they might the more successfully and surely run the Christian race. When they stood before the font, they repeated the Creed, and confessed and renounced their sins, and were then baptized in the name of the blessed Trinity. After baptism, they were signed with the sign of the cross, and were then confirmed by the bishop. They were now deemed prepared to partake of the Holy Communion, and were at once admitted to that precious sacrament. The Lord's Supper was chiefly administered on Sundays, and every communicant partook of the consecrated bread and wine. The wine was first mingled with water, and the bread broken in pieces. A portion of the elements was reserved, and taken to the sick and absent members, as a witness of brotherly love. The whole Church believed and taught that it was necessary for every person to partake of this sacrament, otherwise he could not be saved. But no criminal was allowed to receive it, unless upon good evidence of sincere repentance.

The manner of expelling ungodly members from the Church was at first simple. But after a time it was attended with much more ceremony, and in a much more imposing manner. This change was doubtless designed to make the act appear more solemn, and to impress upon the minds of all, both within and without the Church, the

Who stood for them? What was the duty of god-parents? What was done at the font? To what privilege were they then entitled? When was the Lord's Supper administered? What was done with the wine? with the bread? What was done with a portion of the elements? Was it deemed necessary to salvation? What of expulsion?

awful nature of that state to which the excommunicated person was reduced. It was also intended to keep hypocrites and vile persons from entering the Church, while it made those within the fold conduct themselves in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon it.

About this time, a very injurious way of interpreting the sacred Scriptures was adopted by many teachers. They gave a double meaning to them; the one was plain and simple, the other was hidden and mysterious. Those who adopted this mode of expounding God's word, taught that the Scriptures gave much more liberty to ordinary Christians than to those who aspired to the highest attainments in sanctity. They encouraged the one class to indulge in the pleasures of life, while they influenced the other to wear, at all times, a grave and melancholy appearance, to undergo severe mortification of body, to seclude themselves from society, to frequent solitary places and lonely caverns. This class were called *Ascetics*, because of their enduring such voluntary hardships for their spiritual welfare. This gloomy race of lazy fanatics made their first appearance in Egypt, a country which has always produced more of this class of men than any other. Here melancholy sects appeared and brooded long before the advent of Christ; and from thence their practice spread abroad like a wild contagion, till at length it prevailed, to a greater or less extent, in all parts of the Christian world.

What was the object of this discipline? What kind of interpretation was now given by certain teachers of the Scriptures? What was their peculiar doctrine? Who were Ascetics? Where did they first appear? What is said of their increase?

CHAPTER XII.

PERSECUTION UNDER MARCUS ANTONIUS, CALLED THE FIFTH.

THE Church had now enjoyed, for a season, a good degree of quiet, and had prospered gloriously under the reign of peace. But its fiery trials were only suspended for a short time, to burst forth with renewed fury at the first opportunity. The heathen philosophers had great influence with the emperor; for he was himself one of their number, and being a great admirer and patron of learning, he encouraged them in every way. The influence which these circumstances enabled them to exert over him, they now used to accomplish a most wicked and malicious purpose. They took occasion to represent Christians to him in the most odious light; and, by means of many grossly false statements, they excited his mind against them. He was too willing to believe all they said about the revolting practices and horrid crimes which Christians were charged with. He that had, in other matters, shown himself possessed of so great wisdom and so many virtues, in this instance was so imprudent as to countenance the greatest injustice and cruelty, without stopping to inquire into the truth of the charges. He was unwilling to believe that his brother philosophers were

What is said of the state of the Church? Who was the emperor at this time? Who had great influence over him? Why? How did they use their influence? What was the result?

guilty of slander and falsehood. Thus he suffered himself to be deceived, and, under the influence of the deception, he passed several edicts against Christians, his most innocent and faithful subjects. As the storm of persecution began to fall, and was gathering darker around the Church, the leaders in the Christian army were not idle. They did not fold their hands together and sit down, overcome by fear and alarm; but they arose like the brave and sturdy sailor, who beholds in the distance the wild tempest hovering over the sea, and sweeping onward to overwhelm him with the fury of the waves. They prepared to face the storm, and, if necessary, to bravely perish in the defence of the truth. Many and triumphant Apologies were written in defence of the faith and practice of Christians. Among these, the second one from Justin Martyr appeared, addressed to the emperor. It was distinguished by all those marks of great and accomplished ability which he possessed. Yet none of these efforts influenced the emperor. The persecution went on with great fury. The faithful in Christ suffered the most barbarous cruelty. They were tormented with every conceivable variety of torture. Among the martyrs who perished in this bitter persecution were several men distinguished for their learning and piety, and their venerable age. Justin, two years after his second Apology, was taken, and condemned to be scourged, and then beheaded. At this time, he was in the seventy-fourth or seventy-fifth year of his age. A pardon was offered him, if he would only sacrifice to the gods. But he refused, with true Christian

What kind of laws did he pass? What is said of the Christian leaders? What did they resolve to do? How did they defend the Church? What is said of Justin's Apology? What effect had these Apologies? How did the faithful suffer? What is said of the death of Justin?

fortitude. He was then executed according to the sentence. From the manner of his death, he has been called the *martyr*. But the most celebrated of the holy martyrs who perished at this time, was the truly venerable St. Polycarp. This aged saint was born near Antioch, and sold in his childhood to a noble lady, whose name was Calista. She trained him up under her own eye, and, at the time of her death, made him the heir of all her property. This he soon spent, chiefly in objects of charity. He became a Christian through the influence of Bucolus, bishop of Smyrna. This bishop took him under his especial care, and, having sufficiently instructed him, he ordained him deacon, and made him catechist. Having filled these offices well and with great favor, he was made bishop of Smyrna upon the death of Bucolus. Christians, everywhere, held him in the highest esteem, and St. Jerome calls him "The prince of all Asia." His care of the Churches extended even to Rome, and when he visited its bishop, he was received with every mark of respect. He attended him through the most sacred Christian mysteries, officiated in his presence, strengthened those who were living godly lives, and labored with great zeal and fidelity to reclaim to the truth those who were in error. He made it the first business of his life, wherever he went, to lead men to embrace the religion of Christ in spirit and in truth. We learn how highly he was esteemed of the Lord, by reading Rev. ii. 8-10. When he first heard he was called for to receive the martyr's crown, he expressed

Who was the most celebrated of the martyrs? What occurred in the childhood of Polycarp? What is said of Calista? How did he spend his fortune? What is said of Bucolus? Give a further account of Polycarp. How was he received by the bishop of Rome? What did he make the great business of his life? What does St. John say of him?

no alarm nor regret. Nearly his whole time was spent in prayer for all men, and for the Church throughout the world. Three days before he was taken he had a remarkable vision. His pillow seemed to be on fire. From this warning, he learned what death he should suffer, and foretold that he would be burned alive.

When he was taken by his enemies, he was absent from the city. On his return, he was met by Herod, the chief officer, and Nicetes, his father. They were riding in a chariot, and took him in with them. This was not done to make his journey more pleasant and honorable, but to give them the better opportunity to persuade him to renounce his religion and forsake Christ. When they made the attempt to shake his faith, and induce him to deny his Lord, he remained silent. Thinking, by his silence, that his faith was wavering, they pressed him yet harder. He then firmly refused to listen to their evil counsel. Upon hearing this, they cruelly threw him from the chariot, and mocked him. In his fall to the ground he was injured, yet he raised not a murmur nor rebuke. Of his own accord, he went on towards the place where he expected to become a sacrifice. As he was proceeding, a voice from heaven was heard saying to him—"Be strong, Polycarp, and quit thyself like a man." Many of those about him heard this, but no one saw him that spake. The proconsul then endeavored to persuade him to renounce his faith, saying—"Reverence thy old age." "Swear by Caesar's fortune. Repent and say—Take away the wicked." Then the venerable Saint,

What is said of a vision he saw? How did he interpret it? Who met him on his return to the city? How did they treat him? What did they try to do? What did they do with him when he refused to deny Christ? How did he then proceed? What voice did he hear? What did the proconsul endeavor to do? What conversation took place?

looking sternly upon the whole multitude of heathen that were about him, shook his hand at them, and, looking up to heaven, he said—"Take away the wicked." But when the proconsul still insisted on his denying his Lord, the holy martyr replied—"Eighty and six years have I now served Christ, and he has never done me the least wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" The officer then threatened to throw him to the wild beasts, but it did not terrify him. He then said—"Seeing thou despisest the wild beasts, I will cause thee to be devoured by fire, unless thou repent." To this threat the aged hero replied—"Thou threatenest me with fire, which burns for an hour, and so is extinguished, but knowest not the fire of the future judgment, and of that eternal punishment which is reserved for the wicked. But why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt?" He was then condemned to be burned alive. The whole multitude, with great alacrity, proceeded to put the sentence into execution. They ran and gathered fuel wherever they could find it, and the Jews, with utmost pleasure, helped them in their work. In the mean time the venerable servant of the Lord awaited his death with the greatest composure, and was so filled with divine grace that his countenance shone with a heavenly radiance. He was led to the stake, and bound to it. After he had ended a fervent prayer, the fire was kindled. It burned with great fury, and the flames arose to a very great height; but, to the amazement of all, they did not harm him. They rose in circles around him,

What did St. Polycarp reply? How long had Polycarp served Christ? What did the officer threaten? What effect did it produce? What further reply did the saint make? What was the sentence pronounced upon him? Who prepared the fire? What part did the Jews take? How was the saint employed in the mean time? What is said of the flames?

curved like the sails of a ship when filled with the wind. In this circle of flame he stood, and his body shone like silver or gold glowing in a furnace. And yet another wonder appeared; from the flames issued a fragrance as sweet and delightsome as if the richest spices were confined within them. When his persecutors saw that the flames did him no harm, the executioner was ordered to stab him. When this was done, so vast a quantity of blood flowed from his body that the fire was extinguished by it. Thus perished this blessed and illustrious martyr. In other parts of the empire the persecution raged furiously, and in some places the Church was almost extinguished. It was so at Lyons and Vienne, where Pothinus was bishop. Here Christians suffered a variety of the most excruciating torments. That the reader may gain some idea of what sufferings multitudes were compelled to undergo for Christ's sake, and witness the power of a living faith in the Saviour, one example is here given of the sufferings of a lady in the diocese of Pothinus. Her name was Blandina. This female endured a succession of torments, at sight of which her brutal persecutors were amazed. No mere mortal body, they thought, could sustain what she did and live. They exerted themselves from morning till night, with all the ingenuity they possessed. When one became weary of tormenting, another took his place. At length, being overcome by her constancy, they confessed there were no more sufferings they could invent to inflict upon her. She was then cast into prison, with all the anguish of a body

What miracle occurred? How did his body appear? What issued from the flames? What did his enemies next do? What wonder resulted? Where else did the persecution rage? To what extent? Give an account of the sufferings of Christians at Lyons and Vienne. Describe the sufferings of Blandina.

torn and bruised by her tormentors, to await another trial of her faith. When again brought to the torture, she was bound and suspended upon a stake where wild beasts could rend and devour her. While she thus hung upon the stake, in the form of a cross, she reminded the other sufferers around her of the last and bitter agonies of the Saviour, and exhorted them to hold fast their hope in Christ. When she had endured this torture until the eyes of the barbarous multitude were satisfied, she was taken down, still living, and reserved for yet another and a final conflict. At the last trial of her faith, her persecutors became extremely furious, and, regardless of her sex, compelled her to undergo still more revolting torments. She was confined in a heated iron chair until she was literally roasted alive, while the fumes that arose from her body nearly suffocated her. From this chair she was taken, and, being bound in a net, was cast before a furious bull, who tossed her upon his horns until she was unconscious, after which the spark of life that remained was extinguished. The venerable Pothinus was also made the sport of the wicked multitude. But he was already nigh the grave, and a short infliction of cruelty put out the flickering lamp of his decayed nature. This is called the *fifth persecution*.

Upon what was she suspended? By what was she rent and torn? What was the next deed of torture? What was the last of her torments? What other distinguished martyr suffered? What is the number of this persecution?

CHAPTER XIII.

A REST TO THE CHURCH.—CHRISTIAN WRITERS.—VEXED
QUESTION OF EASTER.

AFTER the death of Marcus Antonius, which occurred in the year of our Lord 180, Christians suffered but little persecution for seventeen years. During that time, several emperors reigned over the Roman empire. No one, however, gave the enemies of Christians permission to persecute them. While this rest continued, the Church had time to strengthen in every way. After this bloody conflict, the followers of Christ appeared like an army of veteran soldiers, when a glorious victory has been gained by them after a hard-fought battle: they pay due honors to their brave companions who have fallen in the fight, they close up their thinned ranks, furbish their swords, cleanse their firelocks, place their sentinels, and make ready for another and still more desperate struggle. So the Church took delight in honoring the sainted heroes who had fallen in the Christian fight. They refilled the places of the fallen by a multitude of brave volunteers, who had witnessed, with admiration, the triumphs of the Church; put in order every weapon they possessed, for successful warfare against the arch enemy; and they stood, as vigilant sentinels, on

When did Marcus Antonius die? How long a peace ensued? What was the state of the Church after the persecution? What illustration is given? What course did the faithful pursue?

the walls of Zion, made doubly watchful from knowing the fact that the enemy had only been repulsed, not subdued, and that he would soon return again to his assault. The recent persecution had purified the Church, and the fear of like calamities in the future tended to preserve its purity. But the wonderful fortitude which Christians showed under these fiery trials, struck many of the heathen with admiration. This was especially the case when they were sustained and encouraged in a remarkable manner by their Lord, as was St. Polycarp. The glorious deaths of the martyrs, and the wonders and miracles which Christians performed, showed to the pagan world that God approved and favored Christians. This witness of divine favor led many, while the fires of persecution were raging, and after they had subsided, to embrace the faith of Christ. Among those who flocked into the Church were men of science and education. The number of these was all the while increasing, and, at the time of which we write, there were many learned men in the Church. Nor were they idle. They used their talents faithfully and to good advantage in defence of the truth. The writings which Justin Martyr left to the Church proved a great blessing. Among these was a book which treated of the principal points of Christian morals. This subject was also written upon by other holy and learned men. They presented to the eyes of the unbelieving, and of those wicked men who had charged Christians with vile practices and principles, the purest, most sublime, and beautiful system of morals the world had ever seen. Another valuable book of the martyr, was

Was the enemy subdued? What effect had the persecution on the Church? What on the heathen? What did the glorious deaths of martyrs show? Did they make any converts? What is said of learned men in the Church? How did they use their talents? What is said of the writings of Justin? What other writers are mentioned?

an exposition of the book of Revelation. Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, wrote a commentary on the four Gospels. Pantænus, the head of the school at Alexandria, and Clement, his pupil and successor, both wrote commentaries on the Scriptures.

Melito, bishop of Sardis, was an able writer, and the author of many works. The subjects upon which he wrote were various, but were all of a religious and practical character. He also wrote an able and spirited apology for Christians, and addressed it to the emperor Marcus Aurelius. He has, fortunately for the Church, left a catalogue of the canonical books of the Old Testament, which is the same we now have.

Appolinaris, bishop of Hierapolis, likewise addressed an Apology to the same emperor. He was the author of several other works, chiefly controversial.

Irenæus, who had succeeded Pothinus as bishop of Lyons, did the Church a good service by laboring to render harmless the influence of its internal enemies. For at all times the fold of Christ has had wolves within it as well as without. While his brethren were contending against its external foes, he directed his attention to the internal welfare of the Church, and endeavored to preserve it pure from false teachers and false doctrines. He presented before the eyes of his brethren the contrast between the true faith and heresy, so that every one who might attempt to teach unsound doctrines would be immediately exposed. Like one who is skilful in detecting and exposing base currency, and makes it his business to instruct others in the same art, so did Irenæus expose false teachers and

What can you say of the writings and works of the bishop of Sardis? What of Appolinaris? Who was successor of Pothinus? What labors did he perform? What illustration of his ability is given?

false doctrines, and taught distinctly what was true. His work was written in five volumes, in the Greek language, and is one of the most precious monuments which the primitive Church has left. But these able Christian writers did not, by any means, confine themselves to the writing of a few Apologies, and combating a few errors. They wrote upon a great variety of topics, and against all the forms of error, and triumphantly defended the doctrines and practices of Christians. In the latter part of this century, this band of able writers was enlarged by the addition of the justly celebrated Tertullian. He was the child of heathen parents, and had been educated in their schools. But he was led to examine the claims of Christianity, which resulted in his conversion to the faith. He entered the Church with hearty sincerity and ardent zeal. His talents were of a very superior order, and he was one of the most finished scholars that has graced the Church in any age. He wrote in a polished and eloquent style, and was one of the brightest ornaments in the literary world, as well as in ecclesiastical matters. St. Cyprian called him "The master." Vincent of Lerins said "that every word of Tertullian was a sentence, and every sentence a triumph over error." His works are among the most useful to the student of Church History that can be found among the early writers.

Though the body of the faithful suffered severely from persecution, yet this was not the only affliction. It had other and most painful trials. There were those occasionally found in its bosom, that had the spirit of Judas. Like

What can you say of the value of his works? Did these writers confine themselves to one topic? Who was Tertullian? What were his talents? What is said of his style? What is said of him by St. Cyprian and Vincent? What other enemies had the Church?

him, in hope of some selfish advantage, they followed Christ in the midst of dangers, ready to crucify Him when their present advantage invited them. Complaints of these are frequently found in Church History, even as early as the times of the Apostles. There were those in the Church who taught false doctrines and introduced corrupt principles and practices. Near the close of this century, a learned and celebrated Christian philosopher was a cause of serious injury to the cause of Christ. The name of this scholar was Ammonius, also called Saccas, because, when a youth, he was a sack-bearer. His parents were Christians, and he was educated at the famous school of Alexandria, which sent forth so many ripe scholars. The writings of Plato, the most celebrated of heathen philosophers, were greatly admired by him. He labored to blend the principles of this philosophy with Christianity, and he so far succeeded in his attempt, that he influenced many of the brightest lights in the Church to adopt his course. In their teaching, they wrapped the simple principles of the Gospel in the dark folds of mystery; and, to prevent the light of revealed truth from shining out clearly, they drew over it a veil of obscurity. Thus, in their teachings, they destroyed the beautiful simplicity of the doctrines of Christ. They presumed to add their own precepts to those given by our Lord, and they introduced vain ceremonies in religious services, by which means the minds of men were afterwards estranged from the true and humble worship of God.

The vexed question, between the Churches of the East and West, about the proper time of celebrating the great

Who was Ammonius? What is said of his parentage and education? What were his errors? What success attended the propagation of them? What further is said of the vexed question concerning the time of observing Easter?

festival of Easter, was again agitated. We have already learned how St. Polycarp failed in his attempt to settle this question with Anicetus, bishop of Rome. From that time, till near the close of this century, the subject had caused no serious disturbance. But, when Victor was bishop of Rome, it once more caused serious trouble in the Church. There appeared to be a mutual desire, between these two local divisions of the Church, to have a uniformity of practice in this respect. But neither of them was willing to yield to the other. Each wished the other to conform to their practice. All the Churches of the West, with those of Egypt, were of the opinion that the Eastern practice was wrong and should be changed. It was the practice of the whole Church, at this time, to strictly observe "The Great Week," or Passion Week, in honor of the death and resurrection of our Lord. It was also the practice to celebrate a solemn feast on some day during the week, which they called the *Paschal* feast, or *Passover*. This was kept in imitation of Christ's example of eating the Passover with his disciples, just before he was betrayed. The Asiatic Churches held this feast three days before they celebrated the resurrection. The Western Churches opposed this, because it interrupted the solemn fast of Holy Week, which they considered very unbecoming. Hence, to avoid this impropriety, they celebrated the feast on the night before the resurrection, and so connected it with the great festival of Easter. But the practice of the Easterns, of celebrating this feast on a fixed day of the month, and three days before the resurrection, was followed by another

What took place while Victor was bishop? What was the mutual wish? What was the practice of the whole Church? What was observed in Passion Week? When did the Asiatic Churches observe the Paschal feast? How did the Western differ on this point?

serious difficulty, which hindered the Western from conforming to them. It often brought the festival of Easter on some other day of the week than the first. This was considered most improper by all the Churches except those of Asia; because the first day of the week was the day upon which this glorious event occurred, and therefore it was properly called the Lord's day, and ought to be observed as a feast. In consequence of this difference of opinion, a very bitter controversy arose; the Easterns contending they had obtained their practice from the Apostles St. John and St. Philip, and the Westerns, that they had received theirs from St. Paul and St. Peter. Victor, bishop of Rome, now undertook to compel the Churches of Asia to conform to the Western practice. He conferred with some foreign bishops, and then wrote a letter to the bishops of the East, in a tone of authority, commanding them to change their practice, and conform to that of the West. The Eastern bishops treated this lordly letter in the manner we would expect. It was received with respect, as a letter from a distinguished brother prelate; but as far as the tone of authority was concerned, it was treated with utter indifference. They appointed Polycrites, bishop of Ephesus, to answer him. He accordingly wrote to Victor, and informed him, in a bold manner and with spirit, that they should by no means change that venerable practice which had been handed down from their fathers. This able and spirited reply, on the part of the bishops of Asia, greatly offended Victor, and he pronounced them unworthy the name of

What other difficulty in the Eastern practice? Why was this considered very improper? What evils resulted from this difference in practice? What authority was appealed to? What course did Victor pursue? How did the Easterns treat his letter. Who was Polycrites? How did he reply to Victor? What effect had this reply?

Christian brethren ; declared he would hold communion with them no longer, and then separated them from all fellowship with his Church at Rome. But his example was not followed by the other bishops who differed from the Eastern practice. They could not approve the course pursued by Victor. But this controversy was fortunately stopped by the aid of the wise and prudent counsel of Irenæus. This holy man wrote to Victor, and convinced him that he had acted with great imprudence and rashness. The subject was then allowed to rest, till it was finally settled, in the fourth century, by the first general Council of the Church, held at Nice. Then the practice of the Easterns was abolished, and a uniform practice adopted throughout the world.

The Church was further disturbed, at this time, by another turbulent spirit. His name was Montanus, and his native place was Pepuya, a little village in Asia Minor. He was an ignorant man, and had nothing to commend him, either of learning, birth, or good sense. He taught that the moral precepts of Christ and His Apostles allowed indulgence to Christians, on account of the infirmities of those among whom they lived. This, he declared, was an imperfection in those precepts, and that he had been sent of God to put a finishing touch to them, which would make them perfect. Having, as he pretended, this license from God, he impiously added many rigid laws to the Gospel, and increased the number of fasts far beyond the usage of the Church. Second marriages he condemned as unlawful

Was his course approved ? What part did Irenæus take in the controversy ? With what effect ? When was the question finally settled ? How was the Church further disturbed ? Who was Montanus ? What were his qualifications ? What errors did he propagate ? What impiety did he manifest to the Bible ?

for Christians ; and those who had fallen into grievous sins, he decided should not only be expelled from the Church, but never again absolved, or restored to communion with the faithful. He condemned all nicety of dress, and especially those ornaments which females usually wear. He taught that philosophy, the fine arts, and every thing like polite learning, should be banished from the Church. If Christians tried to escape from persecution, or paid money to their judges as a ransom for their liberty or lives, he charged it upon them as a great crime. On account of these errors and extravagant opinions, Montanus was excommunicated, and the sentence was approved by the unanimous voice of the whole Church. He first established his sect at Pepuya, his native place, and from there it spread abroad through Asia, Africa, and parts of Europe.

How did he treat Christians who had greatly sinned ? To what did he restrict the dress of females ? What was his opinion of learning ? What was his opinion of Christians who tried to escape from persecution ? What success attended his exertions ? How did the Church deal with him ?

CHAPTER XIV.

COMMODUS.—SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS.—SIXTH PERSECUTION.

UPON the death of Aurelius, the glory of the empire rapidly passed away. Commodus, his son and successor, possessed none of the ability or virtues of his father. He abandoned himself to the voluptuous pleasures of Rome, and became a foul and loathsome debauchee. His reign was inglorious, and he died by the hands of conspirators. It is probably owing to his thus surrendering himself to indulgence in dissipating pleasures, that he molested his Christian subjects so little. And yet a number of martyrs perished during his reign, of whom the most celebrated was Appolonius. He was renowned for his wisdom and learning, and vindicated the religion of Christ nobly to the last. The judge having expressed an earnest wish that he would address the senate in his own defence, he complied, and defended his faith with great power and eloquence. But, according to the laws of the empire, he must die, and he was accordingly condemned and beheaded. Nor did the one who informed against him escape the just reward of his infamy. In the act of giving information at the time he did, he violated the laws. He was condemned also, and suffered a more painful and degrading death than the accomplished martyr.

What is said of the empire on the death of Aurelius? What was the character of Commodus? Were Christians persecuted by him? Why not? Appolonius? What permission was granted? What was the penalty of the informer?

The conspirators that took the life of Commodus, raised Pertinax, prefect of the city, to the imperial throne. He was a virtuous man, and, educated in the school of Aurelius, he proceeded at once to rectify the disorder of the empire. But the military were displeased with a character so virtuous and a ruler so economical of the public treasury, and in less than three months from the time they took the oath of allegiance, they brutally murdered him in his palace, in A. D. 193. They immediately placed Didius Julianus on the throne. The wealth of this man, and the free use he made of it with the military, procured for him the crown. His vices, which were kindred to those of Commodus, were no objection to his elevation, in their estimation. But his reign was of short duration. He had occupied the throne only a few months, when he was deposed by the senate, and executed like a common criminal. In the mean while the Church continued to make progress, and showed its strength in peace as well as amidst bloody trials. It extended its sacred arms wider and wider, and grasped more and more of the world in its holy embrace. Already it had made, among other countries, large conquests in Britain, as we learn from Tertullian. In the year 190, he says—"There are places in Britain, inaccessible to the Roman arms, which are subdued to Christ." It had, indeed, made good use of this season of quiet, in adding to its strength, and preparing for the terrible storm of affliction that was impending.

Who succeeded Commodus? By whom was Pertinax made emperor? What was his character? How long did he reign? Who succeeded him? What made him ruler? Give an account of his reign. What was his end? Did the Church make progress amidst these civil commotions? What is said of its progress in Britain? Tertullian's account?

Upon the death of Didius Julianus, Septimius Severus became emperor. He was a military commander of great ability, and his rivals utterly failed to make head against him. He triumphed over them all, and treated them with cruel severity. At the commencement of his reign, he appears not to have been an enemy to Christianity. It is said that he had been cured of a severe disease by a Christian whose name was Proculus. He showed his favor to Christians by receiving Proculus as a member of his household, and by selecting a Christian nurse for his son Antonius. But a few years after he had been seated on the throne, he was, in some way, induced to grant permission to persecute his Christian subjects. A permission of this kind was sufficient. The violence of the mob, the jealousy of the heathen priests, the contempt of the philosophers, and the bitterness of the Jews, were sufficient to send them all in quest of their innocent victims with the eagerness of bloodhounds. This persecution, though it fell with greatest violence on Palestine and Egypt, was general and extremely severe. It extended to all the provinces of the empire, and multitudes of Christians perished in the most revolting manner. Among the many who suffered, there are two who deserve especial notice. The name of one was Potamiæna, a beautiful and accomplished lady; the name of the other was Basilides, an officer in the Roman army, who was appointed to conduct her to execution. Before her final sufferings, her judge used every endeavor to induce her to forsake the faith and deny her Lord. But when he

What can you say of Septimius Severus? Was he an enemy to Christians? Of what had he been cured? By whom? How did he show his favor to Christians? What change took place in his conduct? What is said of the severity and extent of the persecution? What two distinguished martyrs suffered? How was Potamiæna treated? How did she endure her sufferings?

had tortured her body in every conceivable way, to cause the most agonizing pains, without the effect he desired, he condemned her to death. It fell to the lot of Basilides to conduct her to execution. As they were proceeding to the place of her last sufferings, she was insulted by the cruel multitude with vile language, who also attempted to vent their fury upon her person. But her noble conduct, and the insults of the brutal crowd, excited the profoundest sympathy of Basilides, and he repelled their attempts, and shielded her from their assaults. This sympathy did not escape her notice. She encouraged the kindly feeling in his heart, and told him she would intercede with her Lord for him, and it would not be long before she would reward him for his kindness to her. Then, with true Christian fortitude, she submitted to her fate. Boiling pitch was poured over different parts of her body, little by little, to prolong her sufferings. This was continued till her whole body was covered, from her feet to the crown of her head. Thus perished the body of this heroic and blessed martyr. Soon after her death, she appeared in a vision to Basilides, by night, and placed a crown upon his head, saying she had entreated the Lord in his behalf, and her prayer had been answered. She also told him that he would soon join her in the spirit-land. After this strange event, he avowed himself a Christian, and was baptized. The enemies of Christ then accused him of the crime of being a Christian, and he was brought before the judge. Having acknowledged the fact, and remaining firm in the faith, he was condemned and sentenced to be beheaded. He cheerfully

What is said of Basilides? How was she treated on her way to execution? What is said of her guard? What cruelties were inflicted on her? What occurred soon after her death? What effect had this vision on Basilides? How was he treated? What was his end?

submitted to his fate, and bore a noble testimony to the blessedness of the faith in Christ.

An attempt was made by Tertullian to stop the progress of this persecution. He exerted his great abilities in writing an Apology for Christianity, against the heathen, and addressed it to the governors of the provinces. In this celebrated defence of the truth, he demonstrated the utter falsity of the charges made against Christians by their enemies. He showed they were true and faithful subjects. It is the best work that was written in favor of Christianity, in the early ages of the Church. The Apology failed, however, in arresting the storm. Its bloody current rolled on from the conclusion of the second into the third century. Severus, by a cruel edict, forbade Christians making proselytes of his subjects, and his subjects were forbidden to become Christians or Jews. This law gave the enemies of Christ the opportunity their hearts desired, of doing his Church the greatest possible harm. For no law could be enacted, however severe, that would prevent Christians teaching the doctrines of the Gospel, and using their utmost influence to convert every heathen to the faith. And when the truth of God was preached with so great power and zeal, attended by the mighty influence of the Holy Spirit, it brought the heathen to a knowledge of that truth, though all the powers of darkness rose against it. In the face of this odious law, and with the dreadful consequences of disobeying it, before their eyes, being assured that nothing less than the infliction upon them of severest torments would be their earthly portion, the champions of the cross still dealt faithfully with the

What attempt was made to arrest this persecution? What was the import of Tertullian's Apology? What effect did it have? Could any law prevent the spread of the Gospel?

precious souls of the unconverted around them. They continued to labor fearlessly in the cause of their divine Master, and success crowned their efforts. The Gentiles came flocking into the Church, regardless of what man could do unto them. Nor were the heathen magistrates slow in enforcing the law upon them. They used their power to its very extent in the pursuit of Christian blood, destroying both men and women in their fury. Among the martyrs that suffered during the reign of Severus were several illustrious persons. Irenæus, the venerable, learned, and faithful bishop of Lyons, Victor, bishop of Rome, and others, perished like heroes, who anticipate in the future a happier and more peaceful home than this world can afford, and a more precious crown than ever sat on the brow of an earthly monarch. They left behind them immortal names—names that will be dear to every Christian heart to the latest generation. This is called the *sixth* persecution.

The emperor Severus, who permitted, if he did not encourage, this barbarous treatment of his innocent and most dutiful subjects, has left a stain upon his name that time will fail to erase. Nor was he allowed to go down to his grave in peace. In the closing days of his life he received the frowns of his offended God, whose Church he had tried to destroy. His peace and happiness were taken from him by one of the severest sources of human misery. His family were rent to pieces by the most violent discord. His two sons, Caracalla and Geta, quarrelled with each other, and cherished deadly hatred one towards the other.

What effects attended the preaching of the Gospel? Did the clergy shrink from duty because of the opposition? How did the magistrates use their power? What distinguished martyrs suffered? What is said of the memory of these Christian heroes? What of the memory of Severus? Did he die in peace? What domestic affliction is mentioned? What is said of his two sons?

This domestic affliction greatly grieved him, and he tried in vain to put a stop to it. Thinking that the exciting and stirring scenes of war would make his sons friends, by giving active employment to their minds, he marched with an army into Britain, and took them with him. But all his attempts to remove their mutual hatred proved unavailing. The feud still continued, and blasted every hope of domestic peace. To add to his grief, his sons not only remained enemies to each other, but one of them laid a plot to destroy the life of his father. Failing in this, he even attempted to kill him with his own sword. In this he also failed. But these painful circumstances, combined with others, robbed Severus of all peace and comfort. They hastened the steps of a fatal disease that was preying upon him, and brought him quickly to his grave. He died at York, in A. D. 211, while attempting to be revenged on the Britons.

What effect had their quarrel on his mind? How did he try to divert them? What effect did the exercise of war have on them? What additional infliction did he suffer? What followed? When and where did he die?

CHAPTER XV.

ALEXANDER SEVERUS.—A REIGN OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY.—ORIGEN.—CHIEF BISHOPS.

UPON the death of Severus, his two sons, Caracalla and Geta, were proclaimed joint emperors. But the odious Caracalla, who had attempted the life of his father, could not endure a joint inheritor, even in a brother; and he therefore determined to kill him with his own hand. He took the earliest opportunity, and accomplished his purpose, even in the presence of his mother, whom he wounded in the arm while she attempted to protect her unresisting son. Having murdered his brother, he became the sole ruler of the empire. Deeds of blood and infamy distinguished his reign of six years. As he purchased his throne by an act of murder, so he lost it by the murderer's hand. He was assassinated in Syria. It is gratifying, however, to remember that he did not add to his other sins that of being a persecutor of Christians. He neither oppressed them himself, nor did he permit others to treat them with cruelty or injustice. Heliogabalus, his successor, though reputed to have been one of the most infamous of mortals, during his short reign of four years, followed the example of Caracalla in his treatment of his Christian subjects.

Who succeeded to the government? What did Caracalla do? How did he die? Where? Was he a persecutor? Who succeeded Caracalla? What was the character of Heliogabalus? How long did he reign?

Alexander Severus ascended the throne in A. D. 222. His character forms a delightful contrast with that of his two predecessors. He was amiable, just, virtuous, and humane. His reign appears, at this dark period of Roman history, like a beam of light falling upon a desert shrouded in darkness. He was endowed with a happy disposition and a superior intellect. His mother, Julia Mammæa, if she was not at heart a Christian, was at least partial to Christians. He cherished for his mother that love and veneration which every worthy mother has a right to expect from her child. It was doubtless the result of her careful training, that he was endowed with so many princely virtues. He was an accomplished scholar, a wise statesman, and an able commander. He reverenced Christianity, and paid a sort of divine honor to Christ, its founder. Yet, even during his reign, Christians were not entirely free from persecution. Their enemies had the power to vex and torment them in various ways. Hence, under the reign of the most indulgent princes of this period, occasionally a follower of Christ received the martyr's crown. But, for the space of twenty-four years, they enjoyed a good degree of happy quiet. These golden years were used to good advantage by the Church. It grew mightily, through the holy zeal, fervent piety, and great fortitude of its members. Miracles, also, are said still to have aided in advancing the blessed work. Yet their number was less than in the second century. This decrease in the number of miracles was accounted for from the fact

When did Alexander Severus ascend the throne? What was his character? What is said of his mother? How did he reward her? How did he esteem Christianity? Did Christians suffer during his reign? How did the Church rest? How were these years improved? What is said of miracles?

that they were less needed than formerly. As the Church grew stronger, the necessity for miracles grew less and less, until at length it entirely ceased. The Head of the Church ceased to employ extraordinary means to extend the bounds of his kingdom, when ordinary means could accomplish the work. Another successful means employed to increase the prosperity of the Church, was the publishing great numbers of copies of the sacred Scriptures. The cordial invitation extended to the world to read the word of God, and see on what was founded the Christian's faith and practice—what were his hopes for the future, and what were his reasons for these glorious hopes—this means, sanctified by the Spirit of grace, helped mightily in the good work of converting the heathen. In addition to the Scriptures, other writings, from the pens of learned and holy men, who, since the days of the Apostles, had laid down their lives for the cause of Christ, were spread abroad. These books had been written from time to time in defence of the Gospel, and showed the purity and innocence of the lives of those who lived according to its precepts, and they exposed the false charges made against them by their enemies. These writings were very fit companions to go with the sacred Scriptures, and great numbers of them were published and put in circulation.

There was yet another means which aided greatly in advancing the good cause; it was the consistent lives of Christians, as a body. They lived as they professed to live, and as the word of God required them to live. The pure and holy principles by which they were governed, shone forth

What kind of means did God employ? What was a principal means of extending Christianity? What were used in addition to the Scriptures in this work? What is said of the Apologies written? What is said of the power of Christian example?

beautifully, before the eyes of the world, in acts of mercy and charity. They relieved the wants of the poor, carried hope and consolation to the distressed and sorrowful, and cheerfully forgave their enemies, persecutors, and slanderers. The example of living according to the sacred principles of the Gospel, caused Christians to be admired and respected by all lovers of virtue and the exercise of the best principles of the heart. The Church was also blessed, at this time, with men of great and powerful minds, who attained the highest eminence in learning, as well as godliness. These holy hearts and gifted intellects exerted a mighty power in extending the bounds of the Redeemer's kingdom. Of these able champions, no one excelled the great Origen. This renowned religious teacher and philosopher was born of Christian parents, near the close of the second century. He was thoroughly and carefully educated. While the persecution under Severus was raging, his father was seized by the enemies of Christ, and condemned to die for his religion. Origen witnessed this deed of cruelty with heroic fortitude. He even wrote a letter of encouragement to him while he was confined in prison, awaiting the time of his execution. In this letter he used the following language: "Take heed, father, that you do not change your mind for our sakes." He was not yet quite seventeen years old, when his beloved father was thus torn from the embrace of his family, to suffer death for Christ's sake. Yet he was so zealously devoted to the cause of his divine Master, that he earnestly desired to

In what way did they illustrate the doctrines of the Gospel? What is said of Christian talent at this period? Who was the chief? Give an account of Origen. What is said of the death of his father? How did he conduct on this occasion? How old was he at this time? What was his wish?

give himself into the hands of the persecutors, that he might die with his father the death of a martyr. He was with difficulty restrained from this act of self-sacrifice by the influence of his fond and affectionate mother. After the death of his father, he was supported, for a while, by a lady of Alexandria; but he soon gave up this dependence, and maintained both himself and the rest of his family, which consisted of his mother, and six children, younger than himself. This he did by teaching a grammar-school. At the age of eighteen, Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, placed him at the head of his catechetical school. This responsible office he filled with complete success, and to the entire satisfaction of his bishop. But he soon resigned this office, to enter upon a course of life and action which he had marked out for himself. He changed his manner of life, denied himself the enjoyment of all luxury and ease, ate but little food, and that of the most simple kind, went barefoot through the whole year, had but one simple garment at a time, and suffered himself to take but little repose, and that was taken on the ground. From this self-denial, and his intense application to study, he was called "The man of adamant." His public discourses excited the most lively and general interest; and philosophers, the learned, the common people, and even the heathen, flocked together to hear him. He visited those who were confined in cells and dungeons for boldly confessing Christ, cheered and comforted them amidst their trials, went with them before their persecuting judges, attended

How was he restrained? What did he do after his father's death? What event occurred at the age of eighteen? Who was Demetrius? Did he retain this office long? What course of self-denial did he pursue? What was he called? What is said of his public discourses? Whom did he visit?

them, after they were condemned, to the place of execution, and, when they were about to die, he gave them the kiss of peace. In consequence of pursuing this fearless course, and because of the converts he made from heathenism, he was often exposed to great danger, and several times he was actually seized by his enemies and put to the torture. But his constancy never forsook him; nor did his fidelity to his Master ever wane in the least. His fame continually increased, until it reached the ears of all the learned men of the world. The governor of Arabia, hearing of his wisdom, requested Demetrius to send Origen to him, that he might converse with him. He accordingly went, and paid the Arabian prince a visit. As it resulted with every labor he undertook, so, in this instance, his visit resulted in great good to the Church; for while there, he converted an Arabian tribe to the faith of Christ. This great and good man stood in the foremost rank of the army of the faithful, when the reign of peace began to the Church, at the close of the sixth persecution. He exerted himself, with others, in publishing and spreading abroad copies of the sacred Scriptures, and of the writings of the fathers, martyrs, and confessors. He labored to bring out every ability of the Church, and to extend its conquests over the nations.

About this time, the Goths, a barbarous people who inhabited a part of Germania, were converted to the Christian faith. Into other parts, hitherto unvisited by the messengers of Christ, the Gospel found its way, and shed abroad its holy light. But while the Church was illumi-

What effect had this conduct on his enemies? What is said of his fame? What did the governor of Arabia do? What was the result of Origen's visit in Arabia? How did he rank in the Christian army? Did he aid in circulating copies of the Bible? What other writings did he spread abroad? What else did he do? What is said of the spread of the Gospel?

nating portions of the earth that had reposed in darkness, it rapidly gained power and strength in those parts where it had already been established. The adult converts, however, were received with caution into the Church. The practice, long before adopted, of giving them a course of thorough instruction before they were baptized, was still in force. Not till they were believed to be well acquainted with the essential principles of the Christian religion, were they admitted to this sacrament. After the candidates were baptized, they received Confirmation at the hands of the bishop. This holy rite had been received from the Apostles, and was used in imitation of their example. We are told by St. Cyprian what benefits the Church then believed resulted from Confirmation: "They who are presented to the rulers of the Church, obtain, by our prayers and imposition of hands, the Holy Ghost." After the candidate was baptized and confirmed, he returned to his home, clothed in white, with a crown upon his head. The white robe signified purity, and the crown indicated triumph over the world, the flesh, and the devil. He was then admitted to the Holy Communion. This blessed sacrament was considered necessary to salvation in the case of all who were of proper age, where it could be had. Vessels of silver or gold were generally used to hold the elements of bread and wine, at the time of celebrating the sacrament.

The remedy for sins committed after baptism, was penitence. A confession made to God only, was generally

What course was pursued with adult converts? What was done after baptism? What does St. Cyprian say of Confirmation? What took place after Confirmation? What did the robe and crown signify? To what was he then admitted? What is said of its necessity? What was the remedy for the sins of Christians?

deemed sufficient to obtain remission of secret sins. But those who had committed great secret sins, were advised to disclose their guilt to a proper minister, and receive his advice. With those who had committed open and scandalous sins, a different course was pursued. Some were excommunicated, and never again restored to the fellowship of the Church. Others, whose crimes were less heinous, had to undergo a long, severe, and painful course of probation and discipline before they were readmitted to the Holy Communion.

From the beginning, marriage was permitted to the clergy of every order. But those who remained unmarried, obtained a reputation for a higher degree of sanctity and virtue than others. This opinion was founded upon the teachings of St. Paul, and upon the belief, which was held by many, that those who were married were more exposed to the influence of evil spirits than others. In consequence of these views, the people favored the celibacy of the clergy, and therefore a change of primitive practice in this respect. Many of the sacred order adopted these views, and conformed to the wishes of the people, especially in Africa. The evil consequences of adopting this course, we shall soon have occasion to notice.

Three bishops were looked upon as chiefs in the Church: these were, the bishop of Rome, for Europe; the bishop of Alexandria, for Africa; and the bishop of Antioch, for Asia. But while these three bishops were considered leaders, they did not possess any more or greater spiritual

What kind and degrees of penance did they have to undergo? What is said of the marriage of the clergy? What use was made of St. Paul's writings on this subject? What was the view of many of the people? Which were the chief bishops at this time? Did they possess greater spiritual power than others?

authority than other bishops. Their eminence arose from the position of their dioceses. Their sees were the chief cities in their respective countries, and were called the *metropolis*. At these cities, the councils of the provinces were held, and, through respect, their bishops were chosen to preside over the councils while they were in session. In this way they obtained the peculiar deference that was paid to them. The fact of their becoming leaders in the Church, did not, therefore, arise from any superior spiritual power, or from any superiority in knowledge.

The practice of fasting became more systematic than it had been during the previous centuries. The Italian Church fasted on the seventh day of the week. The Greek and Eastern Churches refused to adopt this singular practice, and this circumstance caused a new subject of contention. As there was more order in the time and length of fasts than formerly, so a practice now generally prevailed of having stated hours for prayer each day; these were at nine o'clock in the morning, at twelve o'clock, and at three in the afternoon. But Christians were by no means confined to these hours in their devotional exercises. The pious sought every opportunity to retire to their closets and hold communion with God in secret. They did not forget the example of St. James the Just, who is said to have spent so much of his time on his bended knees, in secret communion with God, that they became hard, like camels' knees.

What caused their eminence? What is said of their sees? What is said of fasting? On what day of the week did the Italian Church fast? Did the Eastern Church adopt this practice? What is said of the hours for prayer? What of secret prayer? What of St. James the Just?

CHAPTER XVI.

HERETICAL SECTS OF THE THIRD CENTURY.

THE Church, though free for so long a period from persecution, was not free from trouble. The hatred of princes and magistrates, and the envy of heathen priests, were not the source of its greatest tribulation. There were troubles within of a far more formidable nature than those without. Enemies within the walls of the city are more dangerous than those without. Though the Church, at this time, enjoyed a freedom from persecution, and a rich and blessed prosperity, still there were enemies in the field with whom it had to contend. There was no time of perfect peace to the Church; for as one enemy disappeared, or withdrew from the conflict, another came forward in his place. In this way it was kept always militant. Sects which appeared in the second century, continued in this, and gave the Church much pain and trouble. As often as they were beaten or repulsed, they would again rally to the support of their errors. When the champions of the truth thought they had effectually crushed an error, they would often be disappointed by seeing it again renew the conflict, perhaps in a new dress, or at a different point, and calling the

When free from persecution, was the Church free from trouble? Which were the greater evils, the internal or external troubles? Has the Church ever known a time of perfect peace? What is said of trouble from sects? How were the defenders of the faith disappointed?

watchmen on the walls to defend a part of the holy place which had not before been assailed.

There was one event which caused the body of the faithful extreme pain. It was the loss of the polished Tertullian. He left the Church to embrace the errors of the ignorant fanatic, Montanus. By this act, one of the most accomplished Christian scholars and philosophers of his age, became the avowed enemy of philosophy and polished learning, and the advocate of gross errors. This painful event taught the humble disciples of the Lord how little dependence can be placed on man in his highest estate, and how weak he is in his greatest strength. It is a significant fact, worthy of a place in Church history, that a system of papal supremacy was devised near the close of the second century. An account of this sect we find in the Clementine Homilies. In this system, Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, were made pillars, and superior to them all we find Christ ranked. St. James, first bishop of Jerusalem, was made pope. Clement, in his address to him, calls him "the lord, and bishop of bishops, ruler of the holy Church of the Hebrews in Jerusalem, and of the Churches of God established everywhere." In their system of doctrine, they blended errors from the Judaizers and the Gnostics.

The Church was further disturbed, at this time, by another turbulent and daring spirit. This was Manes, a learned Persian. He had been highly educated in the schools of the Magi, a class of celebrated eastern sages, and he was

What event caused the Church great pain? How was he lost? What lesson did the faithful learn from this event? What new system was devised at this time? Where is the account of this sect found? Who were made pillars? Who was the pope? What does Clement say of him? What errors were blended in this sect? What other turbulent spirit is mentioned?

himself one of that order. He was learned in philosophy, in astronomy, and in the science of medicine; he was also accomplished in painting, and in every other branch of knowledge which made the schools of the Magi so justly celebrated. With all these accomplishments, and with a good degree of natural ability, he became a professed Christian. But, instead of leaving all which he had learned that was contrary to the Gospel of Christ behind him, he brought into the Church a firm attachment for the doctrines taught in the schools where he had been educated. These doctrines he blended with those of Christ, and in order to make them agree, he dealt most wickedly and profanely with the sacred Scriptures. He taught that the Old Testament Scriptures were not the word of God, but that the prince of darkness was their author. He rejected the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, as spurious; he declared that wicked men had altered the epistles of St. Paul to suit their own purpose, and therefore they were not just as he wrote them. In this daring and ungodly manner he treated the divine Scriptures, and tried, by throwing away some portions and changing others, to mould all that remained in harmony with his heathen doctrines. He taught, further, that Christ had left the doctrines of salvation imperfect, and that he had been sent as the promised Comforter, to guide men into all truth. Though his system embodied so many fatal errors, yet many embraced it, and followed him as their spiritual guide. These followers he divided into two classes, to one

Who was Manes? Was he altogether a Christian? What did he bring with him into the Church? How did he deal with the Scriptures? What did he teach concerning the Old Testament? How did he deal with the New Testament? For what had he been sent? What success attended his efforts? Into how many classes did he divide his followers?

of which he gave the name of *elect*, to the other, *hearers*. The *elect* were required to submit to a very rigid course of life, while the *hearers* were allowed indulgence in the comforts and pleasures of the world. His system required that one man should be placed at its head, to represent Christ; under him, and next to him in authority, were twelve officers, to represent the Apostles; under them were appointed seventy others, who were to fill the place of the same number sent out by our Lord; and still under these were the orders of presbyters and deacons. All the ministers were chosen from the class called the *elect*. This sect has always been distinguished by the name Manichæan, called after its founder, whose name was Manes or Manichæus. But he did not long enjoy the success of his errors, for he was put to death by Varnes, king of Persia.

The errors of the Gnostics still abounded, and assumed every variety of form. They proved to be a most productive field for subtle and restless spirits in the Church: for speculative minds, that were never satisfied with the plain truths of Revelation, but were forever tampering with mysteries that exceed the limit of human research. This unholy disposition to trespass on forbidden ground, appears in its most dangerous form in the attempt to explain the mystery of the Trinity. One of the first who made this profane attempt was Noetus, an obscure citizen of Smyrna. He taught that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was not a distinct person from the Father; but the Father united himself with the man Christ, was born with him, and crucified with him. Hence Noetus and his followers were

By what names did he distinguish them? What did his system require? By what name was it called? What was his end? What is said of Gnostic errors? What sublime mystery did they tamper with? What were the errors of Noetus?

called Patriconians, a name which signifies that God the Father, and no other divine person, suffered for our sins.

Sabellius, an African bishop or presbyter, about the middle of the third century, propagated his errors. They were kindred to those of Noetus. He denied the existence of three persons in the Trinity. He declared that Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost were but a manifestation of the Father; that they were portions of his divine energy, made manifest under these forms to accomplish his purpose in the salvation of men. It was, therefore, the Father that suffered on the cross, and not a person separate from him. Though his errors were exposed and refuted by Dionysius, the learned bishop of Alexandria, yet he succeeded in obtaining many followers.

Beryllus, bishop of Bozra, in Arabia, also made an attempt to explain the mystery of the Trinity. He was a man of eminent learning and piety; yet, with these associated qualities, strange as it may appear, he departed from Catholic doctrine. He taught that Christ was not eternal; that he did not exist before the blessed Virgin Mary; that at the time of his birth, a spirit proceeded from the Father and was united to him, and that this spirit was superior to any human spirit, being of the essence of the eternal Father. But Origen refuted his errors in so lucid a manner, and with so great power and zeal, that he gave up the contest, renounced his errors, and returned to the bosom of the Church.

Paul, bishop of Antioch, was likewise guilty of an

What was the name of his sect? Who was Sabellius? What his errors? Who exposed his errors? Did he obtain many followers? Who was Beryllus? What did he attempt to do? What is said of his talents? What were his errors? By whom was he refuted? Did he forsake his errors? Who was Paul, of Antioch?

attempt to destroy this central truth of the Gospel. In character he was the opposite of Beryllus. He possessed neither piety nor reverence. He was vain, worldly, and ambitious; indulged in luxury and earthly pleasure with all the freedom of a rich courtier; accepted an appointment as magistrate or judge, and received a salary for the same. He was ambitious to make the Church attractive to the philosophers and nobility of the land, even at the sacrifice of the most sacred truths of the Gospel. In his preaching, he was a pompous disclaimer, and encouraged the congregation in irreverently expressing their pleasure at the performance, by cheering the preacher. In the mean while he managed so completely to control the people, that it was with difficulty a witness could be found to testify against him. His errors consisted in the denial of the doctrine of the three persons; in asserting that the Son and the Holy Ghost exist in God, as different human faculties exist in man; that Christ was born a mere man, but, after his birth, the Father imparted to him his *wisdom* or *word*, by which he performed his miracles. He was, therefore, superior to man, but inferior to God. Several councils were convened to inquire into his errors, before he could be convicted. At last, in a council assembled in the year 269, Malchion, a celebrated rhetorician, by means of a thorough cross-examination, forced from him an exposure of his errors. He was accordingly deprived of the office of bishop, and his errors condemned. His followers were called Paulinians.

What was his character? What civil appointment had he? What was his ambition? What was the style of his preaching? Could a witness be found against him? Why not? In what did his errors consist? For what purpose were several councils convened? At what council was he exposed? By whom? What were the consequences? What name was given to his followers?

While such errors as these were the most dangerous that could be propagated, they were not the only ones. The Gospel suffered from attacks at other points. A sect arose called Arabians, after the country where they appeared. They believed that the soul is not immortal, but perishes with the body ; yet it does not perish forever, for God will recall it to life, with the body. Origen was again called upon to refute this error. He met them in full council, and so triumphantly exposed their error that they abandoned it, and returned to catholic faith and unity. Other sects there were that flourished in this century, based on errors in doctrine, but we have only space to notice the principal ones. In fact, they were almost numberless. Destitute of all unity among themselves, but arrayed against each other, they weakened their power by perpetual divisions and subdivisions, and were at length swallowed up and lost in heathenism.

Who were the Arabians ? What were their errors ? Who exposed their errors ? With what success ? What is said of other sects ?

CHAPTER XVII.

CELIBACY.—CONTROVERSIES.—MILLENNIUM.—ORIGEN AND HIS WRITINGS.

OTHER troubles, though perhaps not so perilous as heresies, vexed the Church during this century, retarded its progress, and dimmed its glory. The perilous circumstances that surrounded Christians induced a multitude of females to prefer an unmarried life, and to take on them the vows of perpetual virginity. Other circumstances conspired to swell the number. It was not uncommon for households to be divided,—a part being Christian, and a part heathen. In a family thus divided, it was a matter of great difficulty to train up children in the obedience of the Gospel. Wives were often subject to bitter restraint: their position was a painful one. Virginity was considered a more honorable state. It was free from care, human prudence approved it, and the praises of the people incited to it. Blinded by enthusiasm, many rashly took the vow, and afterwards rendered their characters infamous, and brought reproach upon Christianity. The virgins were flattered by the people, considered the brightest jewels of the Lord, and the fairest ornaments of the Church. They were so highly exalted, that they were almost beyond the reach of reproof from their bishops. This excessive indul-

What additional troubles vexed the Church? What induced females, at this time, to prefer the unmarried state? What consequences followed this enthusiasm for remaining unmarried? Who flattered the virgins?

gence made them immodest, leaders of fashion, spend-thrifts, idlers, and gossips; and, not unfrequently, they crowned their lives of sin and folly by becoming the concubines of the unmarried clergy.

The popular voice, favoring the celibacy of the clergy, resulted disastrously also for the Church. Many of the clergy, especially in Africa, as we have had occasion to remark in a preceding chapter, consented to gratify the wishes of the people, and to remain in celibacy. Among them were not a few whose natures craved the indulgence of a married life. To compensate for this sacrifice, they received under their roof those holy sisters who had made a vow of perpetual chastity. Thus it became a common occurrence, that two of these celibates would associate in all the intimacy of man and wife. This scandalous conduct, so repugnant to their holy profession and vows of chastity, as well as to the purity of the Gospel, gave occasion for public reproach, and created disgust in the minds of the heathen. It justly alarmed the virtuous rulers of the Church, and called forth their most strenuous efforts to remedy the evil.

The controversies that were prevalent, during this century, served to cool the fervent zeal that had warmed the hearts of many of the disputants with a desire to see all believers united in opinion and practice. In their eager pursuit of victory, they forgot that the heathen world were observing their conflicts, and that they were casting ice upon the hearts of their brethren which had been united in

What effect had it on their minds? What bad habits did they acquire? What evils resulted from the celibacy of the clergy? What criminal indulgence was practised? What influence had this conduct on the Church and the world? What was done by the virtuous rulers? What evil results came from controversy?

the warm embrace of fraternal love. During the preceding century, the opinion had prevailed among Christians that Christ would come and reign in person a thousand years on the earth before its final destruction. This happy period they called the *millennium*. No controversy had ever been awakened in the Church on this subject, although there had been, from the beginning, a difference of opinion in regard to it. But, during the former part of the third century, many writers opposed it. The opposition to this view was led on by Origen, who engaged in the controversy with his accustomed ability and zeal. In consequence of the strong and influential opposition, the doctrine rapidly declined, and soon ceased to be popular. Efforts were made to restore its popularity, but without effect. The greatest intellects of the Church opposed it, and its supporters had the mortification of seeing this doctrine, which they considered so venerable and inspiring, continue to decline, in defiance of all their efforts.

The controversy about the use of heathen learning, philosophy, and modes of argument, which disturbed the Church in the second century, was not allowed to slumber in this. When the miraculous gifts, which were so wonderfully and plentifully bestowed upon Christians of the first century, were greatly diminished, the clergy, seeing this fact, and knowing that their Lord designed to have them extend His kingdom by ordinary means, and less by those that were extraordinary, were induced to turn their attention to the use of the best means to accomplish the

What opinion had prevailed in the first century? What was this happy period called? What change took place in regard to this doctrine? Who took the lead in opposition to the doctrine of the millennium? What is said of the controversy about philosophy and learning? What circumstance induced the clergy to resort to these means?

purposes which presented themselves in the natural course of things. This necessity which was imposed on the clergy, combined with a wish to make the Church attractive and popular with the heathen, induced many of them to study and imitate the style of writing and delivering discourses practised in the rhetorical schools of Greece and Rome. Several of the bishops of that time had been educated in these schools when they were heathen. These bishops retained a fondness for this style, and took great pains in studying and preparing their discourses after a polished manner. This practice wakened afresh the controversy about human learning. Some believed that the study of philosophy, and the acquisition of the learning of the Grecian and Roman schools, would be a great advantage to Christians in promoting the interests of the Church. Others deeply regretted the resort to heathen practice, and believed that it would prove injurious both to Christianity and piety. The number that took sides on this controverted question were about equally divided. It was warmly discussed, and for a long time. Both parties professed to have at heart the welfare of their holy religion, and the prosperity of the kingdom of their Lord. It is not, therefore, a matter of surprise, that so deep an interest was felt in the subject; and, especially, since the importance of preaching was esteemed of so great consequence from the beginning, that St. Paul was moved by the Spirit to say, that "it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." The wonderful growth of the Church, already, in spite of such terrible difficulties,

What schools did they imitate? What is said of the education of some of the bishops? What old controversy did this subject revive? What arguments were used by the opponents? How did the numbers compare? Was this subject important? What is said of the importance of preaching?

by the aid of the most plain and simple teaching, strengthened the argument in favor of continuing the same practice. But the advocates of learning gradually increased in numbers and influence, until at last their triumph was complete. This victory for philosophy and learning was won chiefly through the influence of Origen. He was the ardent and able advocate for their use in Christian discourses, and practised them with wonderful power and success. In his public lectures to the youth, he recommended these studies, in the highest praise, and in this way he succeeded in making them popular. Perhaps another circumstance, which occurred about this time, helped on the advocates of learning to the possession of victory. A number of learned and influential heathen offered to become Christians, if they might retain some of the doctrines of Plato, which they thought were of superior excellence and merit. The desire to gain over these from heathenism to Christianity, and to secure their influence in favor of the cause of Christ, doubtless helped to make the party popular who were the advocates of learning.

The famous Origen, who figures so largely in every part of Church History at this period, caused Demetrius, his bishop, some trouble. His first offence occurred during the reign of the odious Caracalla, about the year 217. The inhabitants of Alexandria were treated very cruelly by this wicked emperor, and Origen, to avoid these severities, fled into Asia. He improved his time in giving public lectures at Cæsarea, in Palestine. While there, the bishop of the city invited him to expound the Scriptures publicly to

Which party triumphed? Who was the great champion on the side of learning? What did Origen recommend in his public lectures? What event occurred to help the advocates of learning? What is said of the conduct of Origen towards his bishop? Where did he lecture?

Christian congregations. Although he had not yet been ordained a priest, he accepted the invitation. This irregular conduct, done without authority and in violation of the canons of the Church, greatly offended Demetrius, and he was earnestly requested by that bishop to return to his diocese. He obeyed, and returned to Alexandria. But, before he left Asia, he was invited by the empress of Rome, who happened to be at Antioch, to visit that city, that she might hear him and converse with him. He cheerfully embraced the opportunity, and used it to the best advantage in unfolding to the mind of his illustrious hearer, with all the ability he possessed, the blessed truths of the Gospel of Christ.

A few years after this event, it was the misfortune of Origen to give his bishop another offence. This proved much more serious than the first. Being obliged to go to Athens to do some service for the Churches in Achaia, he stopped on his way, for a short time, at Cæsarea, where, on his previous visit, he had expounded the Scriptures by request of the bishop of that see. He was highly esteemed and greatly beloved by the bishops of this city and vicinity, and, on the occasion of his second visit, the bishops of Jerusalem and Cæsarea united in ordaining him to the holy order of the priesthood. At the time of this event he was forty-five years of age. Demetrius was deeply offended by this transaction, and stoutly condemned the ordination. For when he was but a youth, Origen had, according to the ancient discipline of the Church, of his own free

What was he invited to do? By whom? Of what irregular conduct was he guilty? What effect had it on Demetrius? What did he request? Did Origen obey? To whom did he preach before he returned? Did he offend his bishop again? Where? In what way? What did the bishops of Jerusalem and Cæsarea do? What was his age? Why did Demetrius condemn this ordination?

will, disabled himself from being admitted to holy orders. This fact, known to his bishop, had been kept secret from all others. But when Origen, contrary to the custom of the Church and the will of his bishop, had received ordination at the hands of foreign bishops, Demetrius censured the act with great severity ; and that his conduct in the matter might appear in its true light, he divulged the secret that Origen, in his youth, had made himself a eunuch, by which act he had deprived himself of the right to take orders, and yet he had, with a full understanding of the fact, and without his bishop's consent or knowledge, been ordained by foreign bishops.

When Origen had performed his journey and executed his mission, he returned to Alexandria. Demetrius then assembled a council to consider his conduct. It was decreed that he must leave the city. Soon after this, his bishop called another council, to examine and decide upon some of his writings, which were believed by many to contain erroneous doctrines. The decision of this council was—His writings do contain errors in doctrine. He was accordingly deposed from the ministry, and expelled from the Church. After his sentence was pronounced, he left Alexandria and went again to Cæsarea, where he was cordially received by the bishop of that city, and by others in that part of Asia. He was invited by them to expound the Scriptures, as he had been before. He complied, and his discourses were attended and listened to by multitudes. Some of his hearers were among the most learned men of the age. During the persecution under Maximin, he fled

What secret did he reveal ? Why ? On Origen's return, what course did Demetrius pursue ? What was the decision of the council ? What was done about his writings ? What decision was pronounced on him ? Where then did he go ? What did he do ?

from Palestine and took refuge in the house of a friend. Here he was kept concealed for two years. In the house of this friend he found many valuable and rare books, from which he gathered and preserved much precious knowledge. When the persecution ceased, he left the place of his retreat, and returned to Alexandria. There he continued his studies with untiring patience and industry, and performed mental labors which appear almost beyond the strength of mortals. So capacious was his mind, so vast his amount of knowledge, so great his ability, that six amanuenses were employed in writing what he dictated. He is said to have been the author of six thousand different works. St. Jerome says he wrote more than another man could read. If so bad a spirit as envy or jealousy prevailed in the minds of any towards this great man, yet all were constrained to acknowledge that he possessed a wonderful amount of knowledge and a masterly genius. Nor could any one deny that he did more to increase the power, influence, and glory of the Church, than, perhaps, any man after the Apostles.

Near the close of his life, he wrote his celebrated reply to Celsus, the heathen philosopher, who, in the preceding century, wrote so bitterly and falsely against Christianity. This reply was a complete triumph over that profane champion, and its fame is justly merited, from the great ability with which it is written.

This remarkable man died at Tyre, about the middle of the third century, ripe in years and mature in the service

Where did he go during the persecution under Maximin? What did he find in the house of his friend? What did he do after the persecution? What did he do there? To how many amanuenses could he dictate? How many volumes did he write? What must all confess? What work did he write near the close of his life? What can you say of its success? Where did he die? When?

of his divine Master. He is esteemed the greatest light of the age in which he lived. He had a mighty genius, untiring zeal, wonderful patience, and unwearied perseverance. All these powers were graced and hallowed by true and fervent piety. Yet, this illustrious Christian embraced and taught erroneous doctrines. In this respect, Origen is another example of the frailty of man, even in his greatest strength ; the weakness of his understanding, in its highest earthly perfection. He reminds the faithful, everywhere and always, of the truth uttered by the Psalmist—"It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any confidence in man." Thus did the two brightest lights of the Church, in this century, wander into error; the polished Tertullian, when he embraced the gross errors of Montanus, became the enemy of philosophy and learning ; while Origen, the ardent advocate of philosophy and learning, erred in speculations concerning the soul in the future state.

How is he esteemed ? What is said of his abilities ? What of his piety ?
What of his errors ? What does this circumstance teach us ?

CHAPTER XVIII.

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH PERSECUTIONS.—THE LAPSED.—
CYPRIAN.—NOVATIANS.

ALEXANDER SEVERUS, upon whose name historians have lavished all the expressions of praise and admiration they could command, came to a sudden and untimely death. While he was yet young, and successfully engaged in the arduous and dangerous duties of defending his country against foreign foes, he was slain by conspirators. His murderers were influenced to commit this bloody deed by the instigation of Maximin, a giant and brutal soldier. This man complained of his royal master because of the sobriety and strict discipline he introduced into his army. But he was not satisfied with having done this infamous crime. The noble and accomplished mother of the emperor, Mammæa, of whom we have had occasion to speak, and whom Origen had the honor to address on the claims of Christianity, he also caused to be slain. This monster of cruelty then succeeded in having himself proclaimed emperor by the army. By these acts of wickedness and barbarity, he offended all Christians, who could have no affection for such a bloody monster. But this sympathy

What was the end of Alexander Severus? In what was he engaged when he died? By whom was he killed? Who instigated his murderers? Who was Maximin? What faults did he find with Severus? What other murder did he commit? Who proclaimed him emperor? What opinion had Christians of him and his conduct?

for their murdered monarch and his mother, and their loathing of the wretch who had done the deed, called down upon them the bitter resentment of Maximin. He poured out his fury upon them in a persecution extremely cruel. For the bishops, being the objects of peculiar hate, he reserved the most bitter part of his malice. Many Christians took the martyr's crown during the brief exercise of his unlawful authority. But he soon met a deserved fate, by which the Church was relieved from the sufferings of his tyranny. He had only borne the title of emperor among those whom he had induced to proclaim him, and that for a short time, when his soldiers conspired against him and slew him, in the year 237. Thus he perished, after holding the title of emperor for a few months, and before he had been generally acknowledged by the Roman people. This is reckoned the *seventh persecution*.

After his death, the Church again enjoyed a rest even more serene than before, for a space of fourteen years. The emperors that followed extended their favor and protection to Christians, which enabled them to come forth once more and enjoy the sunshine of their prosperity. As birds which, having sought some secure place of refuge while the storm and the tempest prevailed, again with delight spread their wings upon the breeze when the sun appears and the threatening clouds have passed away, and warble sweetly from every bower and tree-top, so was it with the faithful in Christ. They came forth again from those hiding-places to which they had fled for temporary shelter, while the storm of persecution lasted, and pro-

How did Maximin treat them? How bishops? Did he reign long? Who conspired against him? When did he fall? Had he been acknowledged by the Roman people? What number was his persecution? What occurred after his death?

claimed, with increased zeal and delight, the glad news of salvation. Philip, called the Arabian, is supposed, from the marks of favor he showed to Christians, to have been one at heart himself. If he was indeed such, the great honor is due him of being the first Roman monarch that embraced our holy faith. But he was conquered and slain in battle by his rival, Decius, in the year 249, after reigning five years.

Decius became a most furious and deadly enemy to all Christians. There is no doubt that every means which the other enemies of the Church could use to influence him to act in this cruel manner, was employed. His persecution exceeded all others that had gone before, in its extreme severity. The laws which he made for destroying Christians, he required to be enforced to their fullest extent. It was his determination to leave no means unemployed which might serve to utterly extinguish the Christian religion from the earth. He threatened to put his own officers to death if they did not execute the laws which he had made for this purpose. They were either to put every Christian to death, or make him deny his faith and forsake Christ. He instructed them to use every kind of torture, and bring them to a slow and lingering death, that the anguish of the torments might be so extreme as to force them to deny their Lord. This induced his agents to try their utmost skill in devising ways by which they might inflict the longest and severest torments on the bodies of the faithful.

What course did his successors pursue? What illustration is given of the state of the Church? What is said of Philip, the Arabian? When was he slain? What is said of Decius? What is said of the severity of his persecution? What is said of his laws? What was his determination? What did he do to his own officers? What were they required to do to Christians? What is said of their tortures?

Multitudes of Christians perished by lingering deaths, the circumstances of which are sufficient to make the feeling heart bleed. Great numbers, also, being tormented beyond their powers of endurance, were forced to renounce the faith, deny their Lord, and sacrifice to idols. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, deservedly called the Great, narrowly escaped death. An officer was sent to seize him, who made diligent search in the fields, the roads, along the banks of rivers, and in all places in the country where he thought the bishop might be concealed. But all this while he was in his own house, waiting the approach of his enemies. Here the officer did not think to look, supposing, of course, he had fled. When he had waited four days, expecting all the while the approach of the officer to arrest him, he was constrained by Providence to leave the city. His domestics and many of his brethren went with him. But a band of soldiers pursued and overtook him. They led him to a town on the borders of Egypt, and there confined him for the night, and guarded the house. But one of the bishop's household was not at home when he left the city, and on his return, finding the house guarded and its inmates gone, he was greatly distressed, and fled. As he was hastening away in his grief, a countryman met him, and inquired the cause of his sorrow and haste. He quickly told the man all the circumstances. This countryman was on his way to a marriage festival, and as soon as he arrived at the place where the wedding was to be, he told the guests what had happened to the venerable bishop

How did Christians suffer? Did any renounce the faith? What is said of Dionysius the Great? What attempt was made to capture him? Where was he? How long did he wait? What did he then do? What event next occurred? What is said of one of his absent household? What is said of the countryman? Where was he bound?

of Alexandria and his friends. Upon hearing this news, the men who were assembled resolved at once to liberate him. They proceeded immediately to the house where he was guarded, and came suddenly upon the soldiers who were on guard, and raised such a shout that they were frightened and fled. When Dionysius heard the shout, he was in bed. At first he supposed they were beset by a band of robbers. But when he learned they were his friends, who had come to rescue him, he begged they would leave him to his fate, or in mercy shorten the work of the persecutors by cutting off his head. They then endeavored to carry him by force; but he threw himself on the ground, refusing to be rescued from the power of his enemies. His liberators were therefore compelled to take him by his hands and his feet, and forcibly bear him away to a place of safety.

Providentially for the welfare of the Church, the cruel persecutor Decius was suffered to live but a short time. He was emperor only two years. While engaged in war with the Goths, a large part of his army, with himself, were entangled in a morass, where the enemy poured upon him a shower of darts, by which he was killed, in the year 252. Upon his death, the fires of persecution grew dim, and the faithful in Christ, who had fled for refuge to solitary places, once more came forth from their retreats, and entered with new zeal on the defence and advancement of the kingdom of their Lord. This is called *the eighth persecution*. Among the celebrated martyrs that perished in it, Fabianus,

What did the wedding guests resolve to do? What did the soldiers do? What did Dionysius believe had happened? What did he beg them to do? What were his liberators compelled to do? Did Decius live long? By whom was he killed? When? Did the fires of persecution continue to burn? What did Christians do? What number is this persecution? What distinguished martyrs suffered?

bishop of Rome, and Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, must be ranked the first.

In one respect, this violent persecution resulted in a different way from any one that had occurred before it. It gave rise to a severe controversy among Christians. The practice of the Church was to require of those who, in time of persecution, had denied the faith, a long and severe penance, before they could be restored to the communion of the Church. In the case of this persecution, there were great numbers, who, according to this established discipline, must undergo this penance, otherwise they could not be restored. But many of them were extremely anxious to be restored to the communion of the Church, and were unwilling to suffer the penalty required. In order to regain, without delay, the place they had lost by renouncing Christ, some had obtained letters and certificates from the martyrs just before they died, witnessing that they believed them worthy to be restored to communion. These testimonies were secured from the martyrs, because of the very high esteem in which their judgment was held, as well as their sincerity and piety. With many bishops and presbyters, these letters were sufficient, when presented, to warrant them in receiving without delay the one who presented them. But this privilege was abused. For many traitors and apostates had also obtained letters, who were utterly unworthy of them; and they claimed the right to be restored on this testimony, as well as others. But St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, pursued a different course in the matter. This great prelate was educated a heathen, but

What controversy arose? What did the Church require of the lapsed? Were there many of that class now? Were they willing to submit to the penalty? What course did they pursue to be restored? Was this privilege abused? How? Who was St. Cyprian?

was at length converted to the Christian faith by Cæcilius, an eminent Christian. In time, he became bishop of Carthage, in Africa, a very important see. Because he had abandoned the heathen, they cherished towards him the most bitter resentment. As soon, therefore, as the persecution under Decius began, they demanded of the officers that Cyprian should be thrown to the lions. When the bishop became aware of his danger, he thought it best for the welfare of his clergy and people, and for the interests of the Church, that he should, for a time, withdraw himself from the public duty of his office, and secrete himself. He accordingly retired till the death of Decius. But, during the fourteen months of his seclusion, he was actively engaged in writing letters to his clergy and people, and to the Christians at Rome, in which he exhorted them to remain steadfast in the faith of Christ. When the persecution ceased, he returned to his people, and resumed his episcopal duties with his usual prudence and zeal. In the matter of restoring those who had forsaken the faith, he pursued a different course from that generally pursued, and he maintained it firmly and boldly. He admitted the high esteem that was due the judgment, sincerity, and piety of the blessed martyrs. But he maintained that the letters of confidence, which they had given to those who had denied the Lord, should not have the effect of too soon restoring them to the full privileges of the Church. It was properly considered a great crime to deny Christ, and offer incense to idols. It was thought that a severe

By whom was he converted? Of what city did he become bishop? How was he esteemed by the heathen? Did they try to destroy him? How did he escape them? How long was he concealed? What did he do in the mean time? When did he return? What course did he pursue with the lapsed? What did he admit? How was the denial of Christ esteemed?

penance was due those who had forsaken that blessed society for which Christ laid down his life; that they could not reasonably expect a light punishment, or a speedy restoration. This decided and reasonable course, on the part of Cyprian, was warmly opposed by many of the confessors, presbyters, people, and those who wished to be restored. It gave rise to a severe controversy, but the prudence and wisdom of the bishop prevailed. The course pursued by Dionysius the Great, was the same as that of Cyprian. Yet, in cases where the penitents were in danger of death, and they expressed an earnest wish to be restored, and absolved of their sins, the presbyters were authorized to grant their request, so that they might die in peace. A very touching circumstance of this kind occurred at Alexandria. Serapion, an aged Christian, had passed his life without reproach. But, during this terrible persecution, he had been forced by the torments inflicted upon him by his persecutors to offer sacrifice to their gods. He was afterwards greatly distressed on account of the awful sin he had committed. With the deepest sorrow, he often begged to be restored to the communion of the Church; but no minister would listen to his entreaties. In this state of mind he was taken dangerously ill, and for three days remained speechless. On the fourth day, he revived sufficiently to speak. He then called to his grandson, who was near, and said, "O son, how long do you detain me here? Hasten, I beseech you, that I may be quickly absolved of my sin. Call one of the presbyters to

What kind of penalty did such deserve? What effect had Cyprian's opinion? What course did Dionysius pursue? What exceptions were made? Who was Serapion? Of what sin had he been guilty? Was he penitent for this crime? Was his request granted? What happened to him at this time? When he recovered the loss of speech, what did he do?

me." The boy ran to the presbyter. But it was night, and he was sick. He then told the circumstances to Dionysius, the bishop, who gave the boy a small portion of the eucharist, and told him to dip it in water, and place it in the mouth of the old man. When the boy returned, his grandfather again revived from the speechless state into which he had fallen, and said, "Thou hast come, my son, but the presbyter could not come. Perform, therefore, quickly, what he commanded thee, and let my spirit depart." As soon as the boy had obeyed the order of the bishop, and the aged father had partaken of the eucharist, he expired.

The difference of opinion in regard to restoring those to the communion who had denied the faith, did not trouble the diocese of Cyprian alone. It prevailed also at Rome, and produced sad results. But while the evil in Africa arose from a desire to treat the lapsed with too great lenity, at Rome the error turned the other way, and resulted in a desire to treat them with far too great severity. There were those in the Roman Church who believed that all who had denied their Lord, during the persecution, should be forever excluded from the communion of the Church. This party were led on by Novatian, a learned and eloquent presbyter. He was unwilling to have any one restored who had been committing any great sin. But the greatest number of presbyters were opposed to a course so extremely rigid, and of these, the most noted

What success did the boy have? What did Dionysius tell the boy to do? When the boy returned, what did Serapion say? What occurred after he had received the eucharist? What is further said of the *lapsed*? Where else was this subject a cause of trouble? What difference was there in the practice? Who was the leader of extreme measures? What is said of Novatian? What was the judgment of the majority of presbyters?

was Cornelius, a man held in the highest esteem for his many and noble qualities. He was in favor of pursuing a milder course towards his erring brethren. This difference excited great warmth of feeling, which was suffered to go beyond the bounds of Christian propriety. At the time of this excitement, it became necessary to elect another bishop for the Church of Rome, to fill the place of Fabianus, who had fallen a prey to the enemies of the Church, and received the crown of martyrdom. The friends of moderate measures chose Cornelius, on account of his many Christian virtues and eminent qualifications, to fill the office. As soon as he became a candidate, Novatian, who aspired to the same office, opposed him with all his powers. But he failed in his attempt, and Cornelius became bishop of Rome. When he saw that Cornelius was elected in spite of all his opposition, he refused to acknowledge him as his bishop, and separated himself from his jurisdiction. In order to gratify his resentment and ambition, he wickedly devised a plan, with the aid of other turbulent men, to obtain for himself episcopal consecration. Two of their number were sent to the lower extremity of Italy, to induce three bishops there to come to Rome, and ordain Novatian. These ambassadors solemnly told the three bishops to whom they were sent, that it was necessary for them to hasten to Rome, that they might, with other bishops, put a stop to the evil dissensions that prevailed there. The earnest and solemn professions of these agents induced the bishops, who suspected no deceit or

Who was Cornelius? What was the result of this difference? At the election for bishop of Rome, who was chosen? Who opposed Cornelius? What course did Novatian then pursue? What did he manage to have done? How did he get bishops to consecrate him? How were the three bishops deceived?

wicked design, to go speedily to Rome. When they arrived there, Novatian, with his accomplices, received them into a private conference. In this secret place they worked upon these unsuspecting and simple-minded bishops with all the artifice they could command, not neglecting the use of wine to overheat their brain. They succeeded, by these means, in obtaining of them, for Novatian, episcopal ordination. But one of these bishops, when he discovered how he had been deceived, mourned over his error, and lamented the schism he had helped to make. This violent and unlawful course made it necessary for Cornelius to assemble a council, to consider and act upon Novatian's conduct. At this council, Novatian was excommunicated, with all those who followed him in his error. He then became the leader of a new society, of which he was called the first bishop. This sect was not distinguished from the catholic body by any peculiarities of doctrine. Their faith was pure, but several of their opinions and practices were singular, extravagant, and vain. They firmly maintained that all persons, who were guilty of the commission of any great sin, should be cut off from the body of the faithful, and never again restored. They pronounced that Church unworthy the name of Christian, which would receive again into its bosom those Christians who had committed any great offences. Hence, had they lived in the days of the prophet David, or of the Apostles, with the same opinion, they would have excommunicated the king of Israel and St. Peter on account of their great

What did Novatian do? How did they blind the minds of these bishops? Did either of these bishops afterwards regret his conduct? What course did Cornelius pursue? What was the result of the council? How did the Novatians differ from the Church? What was their opinion of those who had committed great sins? How would they have dealt with the prophet David and St. Peter?

sins, if they had possessed sufficient power, and would never have consented to their restoration, though they should repent ever so deeply and heartily. These Novatians professed to have a higher degree of sanctity than the Church, and they showed how vain they were of their piety by calling themselves "The Pure." They carried their vanity to such an extravagant degree, as to require all who came from the catholic body to be baptized again, before they would admit them into their sect. This society survived until the fifth century, when it met the fate of all sects; it perished, because it was not a divine, but a human society.

Of what were they boastful? What did they call themselves? What did they require? When did the sect end?

CHAPTER XIX.

BAPTISMAL CONTROVERSY.—ZEPHYRINUS.—CALLISTUS.—
ROME.

THE afflictions with which God visits His people make them more humble, more penitent for their sins, more holy, but they have never made them of one mind in all points. The most pitiless storm of persecution from the heathen has scarcely been permitted to subside into a calm, before the trumpet of controversial warfare has been sounded by some Christian champion. Such was the case after the Decian persecution. It began in the year 257, between the most eminent bishops of the Church. The subject of this controversy was *the baptism of heretics*. Previous to this time, there had been no uniform practice established of receiving those into the Church who had renounced heresy. The practice in this respect was different in different places. Many of the Churches of Asia and Africa placed heretics in the class of catechumens, where they were instructed in the true doctrine, just as others who were candidates for baptism. When they were believed to be well prepared, they were baptized into the Church. But in Europe the practice was

What effect have afflictions on God's people? Do they make them of one mind? What is said of controversial warfare? What was the subject of controversy after the Decian persecution? What difference of opinion existed about receiving those into the Church who had renounced heresy? What was the Eastern practice?

different. Most of the Churches there considered the baptism which Christian sects administered valid. In receiving those who came from these sects into the Church, they used no other form than the rite of Confirmation. This difference in practice, as it did not appear to be essential, caused no disturbance for a long time. But, now, the Eastern Churches established it as a law with them, by the decision of several councils, that those who had renounced heresy should invariably be received into the Church by baptism. When Stephen, who was at this time bishop of Rome, heard of their proceedings, he pursued a haughty, violent, and unchristian course towards them. His conduct was as rash and unwise as that of his predecessor, Victor, had been, relative to the time of observing Easter. He broke fellowship with them, and excluded them from communion with the Church of Rome.

This imperious conduct gave Cyprian no alarm, though he approved the practice of the Churches in Asia. That the practice might be uniform in this matter among his own clergy, and their opinion made known, he assembled a council at Carthage. At this council the practice of the other African Churches, and those of Asia, was adopted. When this had been done, he sent word to Stephen, informing him of the result of the council held at Carthage. This gave great offence to Stephen, who, in the heat of his rash and impulsive nature, replied to Cyprian in a threatening manner. But his threats were of no avail, and were treated with the indifference they merited. The bishop of

What the Western? How did the Churches of Europe receive such converts? What act introduced the controversy? What course did Stephen pursue? What effect had this conduct on St. Cyprian? How did he make the practice uniform? What practice did his council adopt? How did he offend Stephen? What did Stephen do?

Carthage, after having answered them in a calm but decided manner, assembled another council, at which it was decreed that the baptism performed by heretics was void of all efficacy and entirely invalid. When this additional proceeding was made known to the bishop of Rome, he was inflamed beyond measure, and in the excitement of his passion and folly, he issued a decree of excommunication against all the bishops of Africa. This act of indiscretion on the part of Stephen only called forth from the bishops of Asia and Africa an expression of pity and contempt. It was received just as the act of the bishop of New York would be, should he presume, by his own authority, to excommunicate any of his brother bishops from the Church in America. This unnecessary and unfortunate controversy was stopped by the death of Stephen, at Rome, and the desire of other bishops that every thing like bitterness and unkindly feeling should be banished from the hearts of brethren. The question was left unsettled, and the practice continued as it had been before. From this conduct of the bishop of Rome, we learn that he was impressed with the idea, or wished to impress others with it, that his spiritual authority and dignity were superior to those of any other bishop. But there was no other prelate who was willing to admit this. They all gave to him a kind of *temporal* superiority, but by no means did they believe him to have any spiritual power which they had not. And this temporal superiority arose from the fact of his being bishop of Rome. At that time this was the most important city

What did Cyprian then do? With what effect? What decree did he issue? Was it regarded by the African bishops? What event put an end to this controversy? Was the question settled? What do we gather from this conduct? What kind of superiority did he possess? Did he possess superior spiritual power? What circumstance caused his temporal superiority?

in the world, for it was the imperial city, the metropolis of the Roman empire. As the bishop of the metropolis in each province had a kind of temporal superiority which the others had not, because he was the bishop of the most important city, and was chosen to preside at the councils held in the metropolis ; so, doubtless, the bishop of Rome would have been chosen to preside at a general council, at that time, if one had been held in that city. This was all the distinction there was in the degree of eminence among the bishops of the Church. There was no spiritual authority or dignity in the possession of one bishop, to which the others were not equally entitled. This fact, in early Church history, is as clearly illustrated as any other, in the independent course pursued by each bishop in his own diocese, by which they showed they esteemed the spiritual power of all bishops equal, and that no one had any right to interfere in the government of another's diocese. The temptation to indulge pride and arrogance beset the bishop of Rome with peculiar power. His see was the heart of the empire. Here the emperor lived. The throbings of this centre of power sent a pulse to the extremities of the known world. It was the fountain of law and order to the political world. It is natural that its bishop should feel the importance of his position ; that his spiritual power should, in degree, compare with the emperor's temporal power ; that he should look upon all other bishops as his inferiors, and that he should expect from them an amount of deference which they would pay to no other. The Church of Rome was distinguished for its good works, for its charities

What kind of superiority did Metropolitans have ? Were all bishops equal in spiritual power ? Had one bishop a right to interfere with another's diocese ? What temptation beset the bishop of Rome ? What is said of the political power of Rome ?

to feeble Churches, for its missionary zeal, and for the controlling influence it exerted in the preservation of unity or the creation of discord in the Church at large. This Church, so prominent in good works, was also the fountain whence issued many bitter streams. Simon Magus, the father of the Gnostic heresy, found Rome the most fruitful field for the propagation of his errors. Here his most distinguished followers flourished, and continued the work of evil so thoroughly begun by him. Here the ignorant fanatic Montanus erected the central power of his schism, and from thence scattered broadcast among the Western Churches the seeds of discord and division. Even Victor himself was not untainted with the same error. Nor was he the only bishop of Rome who, at this early day, was tainted with error. Zephyrinus, the fourteenth in the order of succession of her bishops, was charged, and with good reason, of favoring dangerous error. He was an uneducated man, and became the willing dupe of Callistus, a favorite of mean extraction, a base flatterer, a defaulter, a disturber of the peace, for which offence he had been banished, and the abettor of heresy. This instrument of evil Zephyrinus used to oppress the clergy, and, influenced by him, he acted the part of a dissembler. While he pretended to regard the counsel of Hippolitus, who was at this time the great champion of orthodoxy at Rome, he secretly favored the error of Noetus. He ruled the Church with extreme laxity, and the tide of worldly corruption, meeting with so slight resistance, flowed in abundantly.

For what was the Church of Rome distinguished? Was it a fountain of evil? What heretic found Rome a most fruitful field? What other errors here found a fruitful soil? What Roman bishops were guilty of error? What is said of Zephyrinus? Who was Callistus? Of whom was he the tool? What error did Zephyrinus favor? How did he rule?

Upon his death, his favorite, Callistus, succeeded to his place and to his imperfections. He was not only guilty of favoring error kindred to that of Noetus, but he assumed a degree of power such as no bishop before him had ever pretended to possess. There was no sin, however aggravated, which he did not claim power to remit. He said that no bishop could commit so great a sin that his peers would be justified in deposing him. He held the reins of discipline so lightly, that the guilty had little cause to fear being disturbed in their indulgence in scandalous sin. These, and other errors of Callistus, were rebuked in vain by Hippolytus. He received no satisfaction for his labor in endeavoring to cleanse the Church of its impurities.

The prominence of the Roman see made it an object of constant and careful observation. From this fact we are enabled to mark the dawn of that arrogant claim to supreme spiritual power put forth by its bishops, which, in later ages, grew into such monstrous proportions. The first step towards it was taken by Victor, in the year 196, upon the disputed question relative to the time of keeping Easter. But he was rebuked by St. Irenæus, and the question remained unsettled until the Council of Nice. Stephen, as we have seen in the baptismal controversy, followed the example of Victor, and with like success. This, too, remained an open question until settled by the same general council.

Who succeeded him as bishop? What is said of the government of Callistus? Did the guilty fear him? Who rebuked him? What is said of the prominence of this see? Can we trace the rise of Papal power? Who took the first step towards it? When? Who rebuked him? When was the Easter question settled? What prelate followed his example? On what question? When was it settled?

CHAPTER XX.

BAPTISM.—TERTULLIAN.—ELXAITES.

ABOUT the middle of this century an important decision was made by a council held at Carthage, of which Cyprian was the presiding bishop. The decision is important to the Church in our day, although it was not deemed of much importance at the time it was made. One of the country bishops of Africa had impressed his mind with an opinion that infants should be baptized into the Church of Christ at precisely the same age they were circumcised into the Jewish Church. He wrote to Cyprian to know whether he considered the opinion correct. At the time this letter was received, a council of bishops was in session at Carthage. They numbered sixty-six, besides Cyprian. He presented the question to the Council for their decision. Their decision was unanimous, that infants might be baptized as well before as on the eighth day; and in case of dangerous illness they must be baptized before, or the soul's health of the child would be endangered. This decision is important for the information of some Christians in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The only question submitted for the consideration of any council of the Church, up to the middle of the third century,

What happened at Carthage about the middle of the third century? What question troubled the mind of a country bishop? How many bishops were assembled? What was the decision of the council? What if the child was not baptized? Why is this decision important?

respecting the baptism of infants, was whether they should be baptized on the eighth day, or earlier. It may gratify the reader to have some additional information upon this subject, an abundance of which could be given.

Origen, that great light of the Church, who began his illustrious career in the latter part of the second century, speaking of the natural corruption of the human heart, says—"The Church had from the Apostles the tradition to give baptism to young children. For they, to whom the divine mysteries were committed, know that there is in all persons the natural pollutions of sin, which must be done away by water and the Spirit." In another place, he adds—"Since the baptism of the Church is given for the remission of sins, it may be learnt why, according to the usage of the Church, it is likewise given to little children; whereas, if there was nothing in little children that needed remission and mercy, the grace of baptism would be useless to them." "And for that reason infants are baptized, because, by the sacrament of baptism, the pollutions of our birth are taken away." Justin Martyr, whose history is fresh and fragrant in the memory of the reader, and who wrote about forty years after the death of St. John, says—"There are many persons among us, of both sexes, of sixty and seventy years of ago, who were made Christians from their childhood."

Hermas, a celebrated Christian writer of the first century, says—"The seal of the Son of God is necessary for every one to enter into the kingdom of heaven; and that seal is baptism."

What was the first question submitted to the council on infant baptism? What does Origen say on this subject? For what purpose is baptism given by the Church? Is there pollution of sin in children to be removed? What is the instrument of removing it? What is the testimony of Justin Martyr? Of Hermas?

Even Pelagius, celebrated in a later age for his heresy, declares—"He never heard even of an impious heretic that would deny baptism to little children." When we consider, in connection with this positive testimony, that no Christian writer for the first thousand years of the Christian era ever denied the fact that it had been the practice, from the beginning, to receive children into the Church by baptism, the case must strike the unprejudiced mind as one that admits of no reasonable doubt.

There is good reason to believe that the *mode* of baptism generally practised in the primitive ages of the Church, was immersion. There is also good reason to believe that this was not the exclusive mode. In exceptional cases, at least, persons were baptized by other modes.

In the beginning, this sacrament was administered to converts and their households, at their homes or at their places of public worship, by the bishop, presbyter, or deacon under whose ministry they were converted. They were generally baptized in fonts. When, however, the Church became well established, and was governed by a system of fixed laws, and each see or diocese had its own bishop, then the right to baptize was confined to the bishop. When necessity demanded, he appointed presbyters to administer it for him, and in the rite of Confirmation he confirmed their act. At first there was no fixed time set apart for its administration; but, in process of time, two days in a year were set apart for this purpose; these were the festivals of Easter and Whitsunday. When the candidates had confessed and renounced their sins, and

Of Pelagius? What else is to be considered in this connection? What was probably the general mode? Was this the only mode? To whom was this sacrament administered? By whom? Who were appointed to baptize? What is said of the time set apart for baptism?

publicly professed their faith in the doctrines contained in the Apostles' Creed, they were baptized. After baptism, they were signed with the sign of the cross, then anointed and confirmed. Milk and honey were then given them. Just before the sacrament was administered, adults gave themselves to fasting and prayer, that their bodies might become fit temples for the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit. In the third century an additional ceremony found its way into the baptismal service; this was *exorcism*, or the act of expelling the evil spirit from man. The impression that all unregenerate men were under the influence of an evil spirit, gave rise to this ceremony. The *exorcist* professed to have power to expel this demon by means of his imprecations, shouts, and harangues. After the exorcist had performed his work, the candidate was deemed fit to receive the sacrament. At a still later period, it was customary to cast salt in the mouth of the one to be baptized, to symbolize purity. This practice was by no means general; it was only practised in certain places. There were other unnecessary and idle ceremonies, from time to time, made to attend on this sacrament, which are not worthy of consideration.

This essential doctrine did not escape the impious assaults of the trifler, or the abuse of great and erratic minds. Tertullian, who abandoned the catholic body to become an associate of the fanatic Montanus, took ground on this subject against the practice of the Church. He taught that in the case of children, unmarried persons, virgins that have arrived at mature age, and those who had lost their

What was required of the candidate before baptism? What took place immediately after? How did the candidate prepare? What additional ceremony found its way into the service? What gave rise to it? In what did it consist? What was put in the mouth of the candidate? Was this practice general? What is said of other ceremonies? For what purpose did Tertullian abandon the Church?

consort, baptism should be postponed until they had so completely triumphed over the temptations of the flesh, as to be out of reach of danger. He would have all classes wait for baptism till just before death, then wash away, in its waters, all their sins.

The Elxaites, a sect that flourished in the latter part of the second century and former part of the third, were arrant triflers with this blessed sacrament. They taught that baptism might be often repeated to the same person, and as often as repeated, all his sins, of whatever kind or degree, would be washed away. To those persons whose consciences were disturbed on account of sin, they offered baptism as an immediate and infallible remedy. They baptized by immersion, "in the name of the Most High, and of His Son the Great King, and with invocation of the *seven witnesses*, sky and water, and holy spirits, and prayer angels, and oil, and salt, and earth." The Church required of the adult candidate a long course of catechetical training, with penitence, fasting, and prayer, as a preparation for the sacrament; the Elxaites took him as he was, and admitted him directly to baptism. The Church required them to cast off their common garments, and clothe themselves in new; this sect baptized them in their old garments. For sins committed after baptism, the Church required severe, and often long, penitence; they received the sinner direct at the font, and in its waters, without delay, washed away the whole burden of sins. In other respects this heretical sect blended in their religious system the errors of the Judaizers with those of the Gnostics.

What singular notions had he about baptism? Who were the Elxaites? What were their notions of baptism? What mode did they use? Into what names did they baptize? What did the Church require of the adult candidate? What difference was there between the practice of this sect and the Church? The errors of what two sects were blended in this sect?

CHAPTER XXI.

SUCCESSORS OF DECIUS.—NINTH PERSECUTION.—DISTINGUISHED CHRISTIAN WRITERS.—PORPHYRY.

UPON the death of Decius, his first three successors revived afresh the flames of persecution. The sufferings of Christians at this time were rendered much more severe, in consequence of a dreadful pestilence, which scourged the land, and spread dismay and death through many provinces of the empire. A great number of Christians perished with the heathen multitude in these general calamities. But what was still more grievous, their enemies charged them with being the cause of these fierce and dreadful judgments. The pagan priests made the people believe that the gods were offended because they treated Christians with so little severity, and that they had sent these calamities upon them as a punishment for their neglect to destroy the enemies of their gods. In this manner, these artful enemies of Christians inflamed the minds of the ignorant with fear and hatred, so that they eagerly embraced the license, which the cruel emperors gave them, to torment and destroy the faithful in Christ. But these three tyrants were allowed only a short time to destroy the just and good. For the length of time

What is said of the successors of Decius? What added to the sufferings of Christians? What charge did the heathen make? How did the heathen priests deceive the people? What was the result of this deception?

that each reigned did not exceed a few months, and, all combined, they ruled only about one year. What seemed a just judgment upon them, they all suffered violent deaths, being murdered by their own soldiers. But a grateful change came to the Church after the death of these cruel rulers. Then Valerian, ascending the throne, put a stop to the persecution in the year 254. This was indeed a most grateful change to the sheep of the fold. They had suffered intensely, for several years, from foes without and foes within; and, like the weary sailor, who, having toiled upon the troubled deep for many long and dreary hours, hails with delight the return of peace to the raging sea, so they rejoiced to see the tempest of persecution pass by, and give place to the sunny reign of peace. No emperor had reigned before who showed so decided favor to Christians. He extended to them especial marks of civility and friendship, and his household was chiefly composed of Christians. But, alas! this quiet was of short duration. Valerian's mildness and favor were soon exchanged for severity and oppression. This change was effected through the influence of his chief counsellor Marcianus. This man was a bigoted pagan, and most bitter enemy to Christianity. He used his influence with the emperor in undermining that good-will he had towards Christians, and succeeded in converting him from a friend to an enemy. He induced him to pass several laws against them. By the first of these laws, the bishops were sent into banishment, and the rest of the clergy and laity were

How long were these three tyrants permitted to vex the Church? What was their end? Who stopped the persecution? When? What illustration is given of their sufferings and deliverance? What is said of Valerian's favor? What change took place in Valerian? By what means was this change effected? Who was Marcianus? What did he induce the emperor to do? What edicts were passed against Christians?

forbidden to assemble for worship. Soon after this law had been put in execution, another, still more severe, was passed. In the execution of this second edict, many Christians were put to death, and some of them suffered in the most cruel manner. Among the illustrious Christians who fell a prey, at this time, to heathen rage, was the noble Cyprian. When the first edict was published, he was banished from Carthage. He remained in this state nearly one year, and employed himself in writing to his clergy and people, exhorting them to stand fast to their holy integrity. But when the second edict was passed, he was recalled from banishment. On his return to Carthage, he learned that an order had been issued for his arrest. This gave him no alarm, but was rather a source of pleasure. For he earnestly desired to lay down his life as a martyr, in the presence of his people, to set them an example worthy of imitation. As soon, therefore, as he felt satisfied that his enemies would not come and arrest him among his people, he boldly offered himself for the sacrifice. When taken before the heathen judge, he was required to obey the law of Valerian, and offer sacrifice to the gods. This he firmly refused to do. The judge then sentenced him to be beheaded. He submitted to his fate with holy fortitude and cheerfulness. Stephen and Sixtus, bishops of Rome, also suffered martyrdom in this persecution. As many as five bishops of Rome received the crown of martyrdom in the space of eight years. From the great number of the poor that were fed from the

What illustrious martyr suffered? How did they proceed against him? How did he conduct under his trials? Did he try to avoid them? What did the heathen judge require of him? What death did he suffer? What other distinguished bishops suffered? How many suffered in eight years of the bishops of Rome? How were the poor of the Church cared for?

offerings of the faithful, the enemies of the Church suspected that large deposits of treasures were placed in the hands of the ministry. Laurentius, a deacon of the Church of Rome, was brought before the heathen tribunal, and examined relative to this matter. He confessed the fact that the Church had treasures, and, if they would grant him one day, he promised he would produce them. The judge awaited the morrow with high hopes of being made rich. But, how greatly was he disappointed and incensed, when he saw before him, on the following day, a crowd of poor people, presented by Laurentius as the Church's treasures. This was considered by the judge a most serious offence, for which he was broiled to death over a slow fire. The memory of this martyr was held in the highest veneration. Dionysius the Great was banished. This is called the ninth persecution, and ended with the fall of Valerian. He came to a yet more wretched end than his predecessors. While engaged in a war with the Persians, he was conquered and taken prisoner, in the year 259. They treated him with a degree of cruelty scarcely equalled in the history of barbarism. For several years they compelled him to bow down and serve as a horse-block for the Persian king, who placed his feet upon him when he had occasion to mount his horse. At last they flayed him alive, and taking his skin, they stuffed it in the form of a human being, then dyed it in scarlet, and placed it in a Persian temple. Such was the dreadful end of this persecutor.

In the year 260, Gallianus, the successor of Valerian,

What did the enemies of the Church infer from this? Give an account of Laurentius. How was this received? What cruel death did he suffer? What was done to Dionysius the Great? What is this persecution? What wretched fate befell Valerian? When did it occur? When was peace again restored to the Church? By whom?

restored peace to the Church; and, for about fourteen years, Christians enjoyed their restored tranquillity with little disturbance from their enemies. The false charges made against them by the heathen, and the dreadful consequences which resulted in the wholesale murder of the innocent, called forth many able writers in defence of the Gospel. These Apologies were often followed by the most happy results. But they were not effectual in preventing the recurrence of persecution. In His wise providence, the Head of the Church still permitted the heathen to spend their fury upon it; and thus, in early time, He proved the truth of His promise, that "the gates of hell should not prevail against it." In the year 275, this reign of peace appeared to be approaching a sudden and dreadful termination. The minds of the people were aroused by the fearful probability that they were on the eve of another fiery trial. The emperor Aurelian, in the fifth year of his reign, changed his mild course of treatment towards Christians, and resolved to attempt the utter destruction of the Church. He was probably influenced to make this barbarous attempt through the hatred which he cherished in his own mind towards the religion of Christ. But if his own wicked heart lacked the proper degree of barbarity for the work, the influence of heathen writers, and other enemies of Christ, supplied the deficiency. He prepared laws of extreme severity against Christians, which, if they had been executed, would have proved fatal to multitudes. But before these barbarous edicts were published or put in

How long did it last? What did the false charges of the heathen call forth? What effect did these Apologies often produce? What did the Head of the Church still permit? What did He prove by this means? What took place in 275? Who was the emperor at this time? What did he attempt? What course did he pursue? What would have been the consequences if his laws had taken effect?

force, the emperor was summoned to his account. After he had conquered Zenobia, the beautiful "Queen of the East," and had brought her in triumph to Rome, he resolved upon humbling the pride of Persia. With this intention, he was marching eastward with his army, when he was murdered by his soldiers. Thus was the Church providentially preserved from the violent hands of its intended destroyer. After this alarm, Christians suffered but little interruption of their peace from persecutors till the close of the century. This was the longest quiet the faithful had yet enjoyed. In the mean while, the Church was making progress,—not only at home, but abroad,—in regions where Christians had never before found their way. The most violent persecutions did not prevent missionaries from penetrating the dark abodes of pagan error, where a ray of holy light had never found its way. Their sentiment was like that of St. Paul when taking leave of the beloved elders at Ephesus: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." These noble heralds labored at Paris, at Tours, at Arles, and other places in Gaul, and established Churches. About the same time, other faithful servants of Christ went into parts of Germany where the Gospel had not been preached, and established Churches at Cologne, Treves, and Mentz. In the latter part of this century, we are told by Scottish writers, Christianity was

How was this calamity prevented? What military achievements did he perform? How did he die? How long a peace followed? Did persecution prevent missionary work? What spirit actuated St. Paul? Where did they labor? At what places in Germany were Churches established? When was the Church established in Scotland?

established in their land. Who can fail to admire that apostolic missionary spirit, which, in this early age, had resulted in proclaiming the glad news of salvation, through a crucified Redeemer, to so many nations, tribes, and people? But able and zealous champions of the cross were not alone found in the missionary field. While the heathen were venting their rage upon the faithful, the doctrines of Christ were ably defended against the assaults of its enemies by many powerful and convincing writers. Among these, after Origen, St. Cyprian was the most eminent of the Latins. He wrote with success against Jews and heathen. As a writer on Christian morals, he is ranked next to Tertullian. The greatest beauty of his writings was the tone of sincere piety that glowed through them all, and impressed the heart of the Christian reader with a lively regard for the pure and holy character of the author.

Another writer of immortal fame, was Dionysius the Great. His fervent piety, his noble deportment in the midst of danger, his patience under persecution, his labors of love in promoting union and true brotherly regard among Christians, his kind and gentle spirit, his superior wisdom and extensive learning, and his many and valuable writings, have deservedly given him the name of *The Great*.

Gregory, bishop of New Cæsarea, was also a writer who did great honor to the holy faith. He was called *The Wonder-worker*, on account of the many and great won-

In what other way, at this time, did the faithful propagate the Gospel? What other great Christian writer is mentioned after Origen? On what subjects did he write? What was the great beauty of his writings? What other writer is named? What won for him the name of *Great*? What is said of Gregory, bishop of New Cæsarea? Why called the Wonder-worker?

ders he performed. He was at first a heathen; but, by the instruction of Origen, he was converted to Christianity. His success in the service of his Lord was so remarkable, that he is said to have left but seventeen heathen in his diocese at the time of his death, where he had found but seventeen Christians when he became bishop.

These, and other able writers, proved the purity of the doctrines of Christ, and the innocence of the lives of Christians. They showed, in their writings, that they were bound, by the most solemn obligations, to obey their temporal rulers in all things lawful in the sight of God. They appealed to their conduct, as proof that they were obedient, dutiful, and quiet citizens. They exposed the dishonesty and inhumanity practised towards them by their enemies, and showed how great sufferings they were compelled to undergo in consequence of the false charges made against them. Nor did they stop with merely a defence of the faith and practice of Christians. They boldly, and with great success, attacked the religion of the heathen, and exposed the folly of worshipping dumb idols, that could neither speak, hear, nor see. They showed how vain it is to trust to creatures made with hands for protection, deliverance, and salvation. They presented the one, true, and living God, as the only object worthy of their adoration; as the only Being in whom they could, with safety, put their trust. They presented Christ Jesus, our Saviour, as the Being after whom their souls longed; as the one all-sufficient sacrifice, through whose merits they

What is said of his success as a Christian laborer? What did these writers prove? To what did they appeal? What wickedness did they expose? Did they confine themselves to a defence of Christianity? What did they expose? What did they present as the only object worthy of adoration? How did they present Jesus Christ?

could alone obtain favor with God, and the possession of unfading joys beyond the grave. Their arguments were offered in the most attractive manner, to impress and influence the minds of the heathen. In some instances, perhaps, they erred, in using some of the tricks in arguments to which their adversaries continually resorted. If, at any time, they resorted to those modes of argument which the candid reasoner would condemn as unfair, they probably felt justified in defeating their adversaries with their own weapons. But the heathen weapons of falsehood and slander they despised, while their holy profession and inclination would not allow them to resort to such base means. These noble defenders had need, at this time, to use all their ability in sustaining the cause of truth. For heathen writers resorted to every artifice their schools had invented, to destroy Christianity. They entered upon the conflict with the most deadly weapons they could command, determined, by cut or thrust, to destroy the system they so bitterly hated. The most distinguished of these heathen champions was Porphyry. In his youth he had been a pupil of Origen. But he became one of the most virulent and powerful adversaries of Christianity the heathen world has produced. Before he distinguished himself as a writer, he was on the eve of committing suicide, but was restrained from this act of self-murder by the influence of a friend. In his attack on Christianity, he did not hesitate to use the grossest slanders and vilest falsehoods he could invent or hear. He gathered from the sacred Scriptures every thing

In what manner did they argue? What base instruments of the heathen did Christians despise? Why was there need of great ability on the part of the defenders of the faith at this time? What great heathen champion appeared at this time? What is his history? Did he deal fairly in his controversy with Christianity.

he could find that appeared to him like a contradiction, and all that seemed in his eye to be gross and absurd, then profanely set off the whole in those false lights and shades of which he was master. He attempted, also, to rob Christ of that superior glory which adorned His life and human character, and which raised it so far above the brightest character of sinful man. He compared Christ, in His life and wonderful acts, with certain renowned heathen philosophers; and so dimmed the glory of the one, and brightened the dulness and deformity of the others, as to make them equal in perfection. With the same profaneness and absurdity, he assailed the writings of the holy prophets. He declared that the prophecies of Daniel were not written till after the events took place which they so particularly describe. The result of his effort was, that a few Christians, who were not thoroughly grounded in the faith, forsook Christ; some who were about to become Christians, were persuaded to remain heathen; others were so far deceived, that they mixed together, in strange medley, the Christian and heathen systems of religion, and worshipped both Christ and pagan deities. But all the fame Porphyry obtained for this masterpiece of slander and falsehood bestowed upon the Church, was a monument of infamy, which will last while history conveys to man the great and wicked acts of those who have gone before. His attempt to ruin the Church was as futile as the power of the arrow hurled against a rock of adamant.

Did he attack the character of the Divine Saviour? What profane comparison did he make? How did he treat the prophets? What was the result of his effort? What kind of fame did Porphyry secure? What effect had his effort on the Church?

CHAPTER XXII.

HERMITS.—PAUL.—CATACOMBS.—NEW ORDERS.—HIERACITES.—DIONYSIUS.

THE Decian persecution drove multitudes from their homes into unfrequented hiding-places. These were mostly laymen, who sought safety in retreat to deserts and other solitary places. The idea of Church life is that of intimate sociability. There is an affinity in the hearts of the faithful that mutually attracts each other. There is an agreement among them upon the most sacred principles of which God has ever allowed man to form a conception. So, likewise, does necessity draw Christians together, to enjoy the ministrations of the Church, the common prayer, the preached word, the sacraments. But these Christian fugitives found in their solitude a kind of melancholy pleasure; they became habituated to a solitary mode of life, and when the storm of persecution had passed over, mingling no small degree of fanaticism with their pious resolution, multitudes remained in their solitary exile. In sacrificing the ministrations of the Church, they satisfied their consciences by pleading that God was as truly with them in their solitude, as when mingling in the society of Chris-

What effect had the Decian persecution? What order of Christians were they? What is said of the affinity of Christians? What necessity draws Christians together? What pleasure did these solitary Christians find? Did they remain in solitude after the persecution had passed? How did they satisfy their consciences in the loss of Church privileges?

tians, and if they offered Him the spiritual service of true and faithful hearts, the sacraments could be safely dispensed with. This was a strong current setting against social Christian life. This class of solitary Christians were called *Hermits*. Paul has the credit of being the father of the order. To escape the reach of persecution, and to gratify the gloomy inclinations of his mind, he left the abodes of men, and sacrificed the pleasures and advantages of social life. He retired into deep solitudes, far from any human habitation, and there gave himself up to his selfish and gloomy meditations. In this state he lived, more like a rude savage than a human being, until he was a hundred and thirteen years old. Many thought he showed, by this conduct, a wonderful degree of piety and religious virtue, and he received great praise for the sacrifice he made to secure the sanctification of his heart and life. His example was contagious, and the praise bestowed upon the hermit did not make him any the less enthusiastic for a solitary life. But it would not be presuming much on the good sense of the reader, to believe he prefers that mighty trial life, so active in good works, led by the Apostle St. Paul, before that of Paul the hermit.

While African Christians fled to the solitude of the desert to escape the persecutor's hand, the Roman Christians had a nearer and more solemn hiding-place. The Catacombs afforded them a place of refuge. These mansions of the dead are a vast net-work of subterranean vaults, extending beneath and around the ancient metropo-

What was this class of Christians called? Who was the father of hermits? Give an account of Paul. How did he live in his solitude? What was the opinion of many in regard to his course? How long did he live in this state? What effect had his example? Which life is more in accordance with the Gospel, St. Paul's or Paul the hermit's? Where did the Roman Christians flee in times of persecution? What are the Catacombs?

lis of the world. In their silent and steady growth, they were a type of the early Christian Church, which, in less than three centuries, undermined and overthrew its mighty system of superstition and error. Here was laid to rest all that was mortal of that "noble army of martyrs," the soldiers of the cross who fell bleeding at Rome through nine bitter persecutions. Everywhere, in this city of the dead, early Christian art is visible, and the inscription abounds, so expressive of pure and simple faith, he rests "in peace." The remains of some of the dead, who have reposed here for sixteen hundred years, are still visible. Hither, in times of persecution, the Roman Christian fled. Presbyters, with their catechumens, when hunted from the face of the earth, fled here, and in these dark and solemn retreats, gave them instruction and council. Here bands of the faithful would sometimes be discovered by their enemies, and destroyed while engaged in religious services. Stephen is said to have been seized in this place while thus engaged, and hurried away to a martyr's death. Sixtus II., his successor, was butchered at the foot of one of the Christian altars erected here. These circumstances have rendered the study of the Catacombs a subject of exciting and deep interest. The long reign of peace that succeeded the ninth persecution, was fruitful of evil within the Church. As the fear of persecution diminished, and the reproach that attached to all who bore the Christian name began to give place to respect and esteem, then wicked and profane persons came more plentifully into the Church,

Of what were they the type? How? Who were buried there? What is visible everywhere in the Catacombs? What inscription abounds? What is still visible? Who were hunted here? Who was seized here? What is said of Sixtus II.? What evils resulted from the long reign of peace? How can you account for this?

and brought with them their evil influence. The power of the tempter was also more successfully exerted over human frailty. Christians were more off their guard. Many of the clergy allowed a vain ambition to spring up in their hearts, and produce its evil fruits. This spirit we have already seen at work in the conduct of Victor and Stephen. But even among the blessed Apostles there was manifest the same unholy ambition. St. Luke records the fact that "there was a strife among them, who should be the greatest." And from him we learn how firmly the Head of the Church rebuked this unholy spirit. But at the time of which we write, this evil principle prevailed to a much greater extent than ever before in the Church. Some bishops assumed a greater degree of power than of right belonged to them, and encroached upon the rights of their brethren. Some indulged in pomps and vanities, and made a princely display of their official station and authority. This pride of station among bishops induced many of their presbyters and deacons to follow their example. In this manner the influence of a vain ambition was spread abroad like a vile contagion, affecting many in holy orders with its baneful influence. This spirit of pride was largely concerned in producing several inferior orders in the service of the Church. These were the *sub-deacons, attendants, doorkeepers, readers, exorcists, and copiateæ*. It was made the duty of the *sub-deacons* to relieve the deacons of the inferior part of their service. They prepared the vessels of the altar, and delivered them to the deacons in the time of

Did ambition affect the clergy? Was the same spirit manifest among the Apostles? What does St. Luke say? Had this spirit of ambition increased? What is said of the conduct of some bishops? What effect had this conduct on others? What inferior orders were created? What was the duty of sub-deacons?

divine service. They attended the doors of the church when the Holy Communion was administered, and carried the messages of the bishops to foreign Churches. *Attendants* were employed to light the candles of the church, and attend the ministers with the elements for the sacrament. *Doorkeepers*, as the name implies, were occupied in opening and closing the doors of the church, under the direction of the *sub-deacons*. It devolved on them to give notice of the times of prayer and Church assemblies. This order probably arose in time of persecution, when Christians were watched by their enemies, and private signals were employed, by some authorized person, in order to avoid discovery. *Readers* were appointed to read the Scriptures in that part of the Church service to which the catechumens were admitted. *Exorcists* were those persons who had power over evil spirits, and were employed to drive them out of the bodies of the possessed. The *copiatae* were an order of men set apart to attend on funerals, and to provide for the proper burial of the dead.

In the latter part of the third century there was a step taken towards the erection of that powerful instrument of the Roman Church in a later age, the confessional. Places were prepared and set apart in churches, for hearing private confession of sins.

The sign of the cross now came into very general use, and many believed eminent virtues attended it. They thought, in times of trial and danger, it would preserve them from harm. It was considered the surest defence

What duties devolved on attendants? What on doorkeepers? What gave rise to this order? What duties did readers perform? What exorcists? Who were the copiatae? When was the first step taken towards the Confessional? What was the Confessional? What is said of the use of the sign of the cross? What advantage did some believe it possessed?

against the power and influence of evil spirits, and was used before engaging in any important enterprise, that its triumphant power might bring success.

The practice of using incense began now to appear in some churches. A few Christians believed that the rich and fragrant odors that arise from the burning of precious gums and spices, would be pleasing in the sight of God, and would aid in securing His favor. They seem to have lost sight of that direct, simple, and unfailing source of relief in every time of need, pledged to them by our Saviour—"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." Losing sight of this never-failing and ever-ready help, they added to those holy institutions which he appointed, the service of Jewish and heathen altars.

A Christian sect called *Hieracites*, after the name of its founder, Hierax, had its rise in the latter part of this century. Hierax was distinguished for his great learning, and for his venerable appearance of sanctity. He taught that all children dying before they knew what their duty was to God and man, were lost in everlasting perdition. He believed that Melchizedec, king of Salem, who blessed Abraham, was the Holy Ghost. He denied the doctrine of the resurrection, and so mingled fiction with the interpretation of Scripture, as to darken and obscure its lucid truths. There were other errors in his system of less importance, none of which obtained any real support from

What is the use of incense? What did they forget? Could any advantage arise from the use of this Jewish and heathen rite? Who were the Hieracites? For what was Hierax distinguished? What revolting doctrine did he teach? What did he believe of Melchizedec? What great truth did he deny? What is said of his other errors?

the Bible, and all of which were condemned by the faith and practice of the universal Church.

Some of the sects of this century continued to disturb the peace of the Church for many years; others, however, were of short duration. Some dwindled away, and their wreck was lost in heathenism; others were reclaimed to the bosom of the faithful. A beautiful instance of the latter occurred in the history of Dionysius the Great. It happened a short time before the death of that eminent prelate. Nepos, a bishop of Africa, had made a vigorous attempt to restore to its former popularity the doctrine of the millennium, which had become unpopular through the efforts of Origen and other able writers. He wrote a book in support of his opinions, which gave rise to a bitter controversy and to sad dissensions in Africa. At Arsinoe, a town in Egypt, it caused lamentable divisions among the brethren. To remove these differences and restore quiet to the Church, Dionysius made them a visit. He called together the clergy from all the neighboring villages, and earnestly recommended a public examination of the subject in dispute. Those who were the advocates of the opinion of Nepos, presented his work as a satisfactory defence of the millenarian doctrine. Dionysius took the book, and with the utmost patience devoted three entire days to the examination of its contents, and in the mean while, as he proceeded, exposing its errors in the presence of all who were willing to listen to the examination? Entire freedom was given to those who were opposed to his

Did the sects of this century continue to disturb the Church long? Were any reclaimed from their errors? What example is given of the influence of Dionysius the Great? What schism did he heal? How? What book was presented by these Millenarians? How did Dionysius treat the subject? What liberty did he grant to those opposed to his views?

views, to offer their objections to them and to defend their own doctrine. He kept continually before their minds the object of their search, which was, to arrive at divine truth. By his kind, gentle, and conciliating course, he succeeded in persuading all to lay aside every thing that might bias their judgment and prevent their arriving at truth. He set them an example of mutual concession. He yielded whatever he could, consistently, for the sake of unity. No arguments, doubts, or objections were avoided, but were candidly met and considered. In this manner, with perfectly harmonious feelings and good-will, they advanced carefully and thoughtfully in their work of reconciliation, until Coracio, the leader of the opposing party, arose in the assembly, and, in the presence of all, confessed that he had embraced an error, but now renounced it, and would never again mention or teach it. Dionysius returned to Alexandria with a heart overflowing with grateful feeling that God had made him the happy instrument in removing strife from the Church, and reclaiming so many wandering sheep from the ways of error.

What did he keep before their minds? What good example did he set them? Was the discussion harmonious? What did Coracio confess? Did he renounce his errors? What were the feelings of Dionysius on his return?

CHAPTER XXIII.

PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.—CHURCHES OF SYRIA, OF MACEDONIA, OF ROME, OF GAUL, OF SPAIN, OF BRITAIN, OF AFRICA.—CLOSE OF THIRD CENTURY.

THE progress of Christianity was different from any other system of religion. As its Founder foretold, by the parable of the leaven, which silently diffused itself through the whole mass of meal till all was leavened, so Christianity diffused itself through the whole lump of society. In a quiet and unpretending way, it extended its influence through every class, and won converts from every grade of community. It was at this secret work nearly three hundred years, before the civil power suffered it to make its conquests in peace. From the beginning it stood aloof from political intrigue, nor ever turned the scales for political rivals. By rendering “to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s,” it studiously avoided giving any just cause of offence to the civil magistrate. The most cultivated nations of the world were planted around the Mediterranean, and here it began its work, challenging the wise and prudent of the world to investigate its claims. The severest conflicts through

How does the progress of Christianity compare with other religious systems? What is said of leaven? How did Christianity extend itself? How long before the civil power gave it liberty to do its work? Did it interfere in politics? Where were found the most cultivated nations?

which it had to pass, were suffered to befall it in its infancy ; its most bloody battles were fought in its most tender age, and when the army of the faithful was the smallest. Yet it survived. The "gates of hell" could not prevail against it. The blood of its martyrs was its fruitful seed, which produced thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold. The circumstance of its rise and progress is an unparalleled wonder, and the faithful historian of Christ's Church records a mighty miracle. It is impossible to account for it on the principles of human reason. The problem is too hard for the philosopher to solve. At the close of the third century it had become a great power. Church edifices were numerous, and many of them were among the most respectable buildings of the age. Old ones were repaired and enlarged, and new ones erected, in all parts. At Rome there were no less than fifty, with their complement of clergy. With its increasing numbers and power, the Church had also grown in wealth. The sacred vessels of silver and gold that adorned the Church service, indicated its temporal prosperity. The Syrian Church extended over a vast region of country, embracing Mesopotamia on the east, and Cyprus on the west. Palestine, or the Holy Land, was its centre. Here the Sun of Righteousness arose and diffused, through His disciples, the light of the Gospel, east, west, north, and south. Next to this land, honored with so many sacred scenes and events, Asia Minor ranks as the field of early Christian labor. This was the scene of St. Paul's earliest battles for the faith he had persecuted,

At what age did the Church suffer most ? What is the greatest wonder ? How can it be solved ? What size had the Church attained at the close of the third century ? What is said of church buildings ? How many at Rome ? What of the wealth of the Church ? What did the Syrian Church embrace ? What was its centre ? What was the field of St. Paul's earliest labors ?

and for the honor of his Lord, whose religion he had tried to exterminate. To the brethren of the Churches which he had planted here, he addressed several of his epistles. To the angels, or bishops, of the Churches in Asia Minor, St. John was instructed of God to address a portion of that wonderful book of his Revelation. This land was the grand nursery of the early Church, yielding the greatest number of converts to the faith. But while its soil was so rich, and produced so abundantly the fruits of the Gospel, it was not free from tares. It produced also a luxuriant growth of heresies. The Judaizing and Gnostic sects flourished here. This land gave birth to Montanus and Novatian, two great schismatics and disturbers of the peace of the Church. The Church here shared in the bitter strife which so long agitated the household of faith, respecting the time of observing Easter. Nor was it free from the influence of other errors, started in distant parts of the empire. In the reign of Decius, the barbarous Goths invaded the country, and threw all things into confusion. These rude invaders forced many Christians to deny the faith. On the contrary, some of them were converted to Christianity, and carried with them the seeds of divine life and light, to plant around their distant and rude firesides. It has been estimated that in its several provinces there were, at this time, eighty bishops in the Syrian Church.

From Asia Minor, the great Apostle, as we have seen, proceeded westward, and established Churches in Mace-

To what Churches did he write several of his epistles? What is further said of the Church in Asia Minor? What of the heresies? What fanaticism flourished here? What is said of the Goths? How many bishops in the Syrian Church at this time? Where did the Apostle Paul go from Asia Minor?

donia and Achaia. In these provinces the Church had continued to grow and extend its dominion, and, embracing the island of Crete, it numbered, at the close of the third century, as many as fifty dioceses.

The Roman Church, with the islands in the Mediterranean west of Crete, numbered more than a hundred sees and dioceses. The Gallic Church, begun at Lyons and Vienna, survived and flourished, though, during the fifth and sixth persecutions, a host of its martyr heroes laid down their lives for the faith. The prosperity of this Church was greatly increased by the addition of seven bishops; who, in the midst of that dreadful storm of persecution raised by Decius, boldly entered upon their perilous mission, and founded sees at Paris, Arles, and other chief towns and commanding positions.

The Church of Spain, in the middle of this century, had also become an important limb of the catholic tree. At the close of the Decian persecution, an event occurred which is worthy of particular remark in this connection. Two bishops, Basilides and Martialis, were proved guilty of apostasy in this persecution. They were bishops of Leon and Astorga, in Spain, and for this crime, of denying the faith, they were deposed by their brethren. Felix and Salinus were appointed in their place. But Basilides endeavored to regain his place and power; and to secure his restoration, he went to Rome and won over Stephen, its bishop, to his cause. The brethren of Spain, hearing of his plans and their success, and fearing that an attempt

What is said of the growth of the Church here? What of the Roman Church? What is said of the Gallic Church? What event greatly increased its prosperity? At what towns was the Church established? What was the state of the Spanish Church? What event occurred in it at the close of the Decian persecution? How did Basilides try to regain his office and power? What course did the brethren in Spain pursue?

would be made to force him upon them again as their bishop, laid their case before St. Cyprian and the Church in Northern Africa. The subject was submitted to an African synod, which decided that the course pursued by the Spanish Church was just, and agreeable to canon law; it advised them to persist in rejecting the apostate bishops, and to have no fear of the consequences.

The history of the British Church, though planted, as we have seen, in apostolic times, is involved in much obscurity during the first three centuries; but, in the fourth, it becomes an object of interest, and commands the attention of the reader.

In the northern portion of Africa, stretching along the Mediterranean, there were, at the close of the third century, as many as a hundred sees and dioceses. A portion of Arabia contained, at least, twenty-one dioceses, having its principal see at Bostria. This summary only embraces the most important parts of the Christian world at this time. The Church had extended itself north, south, and east, beyond these bounds, and was daily advancing.

The third century closed in upon the Church, leaving it in a state of the highest prosperity. It was still enjoying that reign of peace with which, for a number of years, it had been blessed. It was an harmonious and powerful body, united in spirit, in doctrine, in discipline, in worship, and in zeal for the triumphs of the Gospel. The Head of the Church had strengthened its defences, and disciplined the army of the faithful for new and more arduous labors,

What was the decision of the African synod? What can you say of the British Church? When does it become an object of interest? What was the state of the African Church? In what state was the Church at the close of the third century? What can you say of its harmony and power? What of its unity? What trial was it yet to endure?

and for an approaching bloody conflict, which would out-rival all that had gone before in brutal atrocity. The blood of the early martyrs had not been spilt in vain. Where one was found in the first century ready to lay down his life for the faith, now hundreds stood forth to fill his place. Thus were heathen rage and malice rewarded. The Church grew in the night of adversity, as well as under the sun of prosperity.

What was the comparison between the Church in the first and close of the third century ?

CHAPTER XXIV.

DIOCLETIAN, MAXIMIAN, GALERIUS.—TENTH PERSECUTION.
—DEATH OF ST. ALBAN IN BRITAIN.

WE have now arrived at a period in our history which is marked by some of the most important events in its annals. Some of these events overshadowed the Church with the most gloomy horrors. These melancholy events were followed by others so happy and brilliant, as to animate the hearts of the faithful with the most rapturous joy and delight.

At the beginning of the fourth century, the empire was ruled by four princes, two of whom were superior to the others in authority and dignity. These two were Diocletian and Maximian. Under their administration, the repose which the Church had so long enjoyed, still continued. But its great prosperity and rapid growth alarmed the pagans and excited their jealousy. Especially the fears of their priests were excited to the highest degree. They saw that their influence and power were actually in danger of being undone by the increasing strength of Christianity. These fears aroused them to uncommon activity in defence of their system of religion. The nine

What is said of this period of Church History? What of its sad and happy events? By whom was the empire ruled at the beginning of the fourth century? How did they compare in power? What was the state of the Church? Whose jealousy did it excite? What did it induce the heathen to do?

attempts which they had already made to destroy it by persecution, and which had so signally failed, were not sufficient to convince them of the folly of this course. Their ablest writers had made the attempt by ridicule, misrepresentation, and falsehood to destroy it, but had utterly failed. The only practicable way that opened to them, to accomplish their end, appeared to be by persecution. They accordingly resolved to urge Diocletian to initiate the bloody drama. The mind of this monarch was timid and superstitious. The priests knew well how to act upon these weak points in his nature, and they attempted to influence him to gratify their wishes by means of their lying oracles and deceptive arts. When they had employed every means without the desired effect, they turned their attention to another of the princes, whose natural constitution of mind fitted him well for this purpose. This was Galerius, one of the inferior rulers. The temper of this man was fierce and savage, and his education was confined to the cruel arts of war. The priests, with the aid of his superstitious mother, too easily influenced him to favor their measures, and aid them in their bloody work. He enlisted in their cause with a zeal that would have honored a noble work. He urged Diocletian, with unwearyed effort, to pass laws against his Christian subjects, whom he represented as haters of the gods, and therefore the enemies of his government. At last he succeeded in obtaining his request. In the year 303, Diocletian gave his sanction to a severe law against Christians. But he

Did the nine persecutions they had inflicted have any influence over them? What was the only way they saw to destroy the Church? What did they now try to do? With what effect? Who was Galerius? What was his character? What did he do? What effect had these united efforts on Diocletian? When did he commence persecution?

was so averse to shedding blood, that he would not grant permission to put them to death. The law he passed, ordered that their churches should be destroyed, their writings and sacred books burned, their civil rights and privileges taken from them, and that they should not be allowed to have any honors or offices of a temporal kind. Though Diocletian did not design that this law should cause the blood of Christians to flow, yet he was mistaken. There were very many of the faithful who could be forced by no laws or threatenings to give up to the flames the holy Scriptures and other writings which they held sacred. Those Christians who did surrender them, were severely condemned by their brethren, and called *traitors*. Such, however, as refused to obey the law, were put to death for their disobedience. This was but the beginning of trouble. It was only the little rill, in comparison with the deluge of sorrows that was soon to overwhelm the Church. Soon after the first edict was passed, the palace that the infamous Galerius was occupying with Diocletian was twice discovered to be on fire. This attempt to burn the palace was probably made by Galerius himself, or by some one in his interest, for the purpose of finding some charge, though false, to make against Christians, to inflame yet more the hatred of the emperor. They accused Christians of having tried to burn the palace, for revenge upon the authors of their sorrows. This unjust and cruel charge was too readily believed by Diocletian, and caused the death of many as incendiaries, some of whom were tortured in a

What law did he pass? Did Diocletian intend to take the lives of Christians? Would Christians surrender their sacred books? Who were called traitors? What is said of the palace occupied by the emperors? Who probably made the attempt to burn the palace? For what purpose? With what effect?

dreadful manner. About the same time, great tumults arose among the people in other parts, and the followers of Christ were charged with being the authors of these. The hatred and fury of the emperor were now sufficiently excited against them to believe any report to their harm, and this new charge inflamed him to the highest pitch. He now gave orders that all the bishops and other ministers should be seized and cast into prison. When this unjust and barbarous act had been executed, he proceeded to persecute them still further, and in a manner which makes humanity shudder. He introduced the bloody drama by a fiend-like act. When in Nicomedia, the seat of his court, six hundred of the faithful were assembled in a church of that city, on Christmas day, to celebrate the nativity of their Lord. The emperor, being apprised of the fact, gave the terrible order to bar the doors, and set the building on fire. His officers, fearing man rather than God, obeyed, and they all perished while sending up their jubilant hymns of praise to God for the gift of a Saviour. Having secured as many of the bishops and clergy in prison as he could, he attempted to make them all sacrifice to his gods, and so deny Christ. He instructed his agents, if they could not otherwise make them obey, to ply them with every variety of torture, and such as was most lingering and extreme, to force them to deny their faith. He thought if he could succeed in making the bishops and other clergy sacrifice to his idols, he could easily induce the laity to follow their example. In the attempt to accom-

What else occurred about the same time? What effect had these tumults on the emperors? What new step was now taken in the progress of persecution? What bloody act did he perform in Nicomedia? On what day did it occur? What did he try to make the bishops and clergy in prison do? What means did he use? What did he hope to accomplish?

plish this awful purpose, great numbers of the clergy, eminent for their learning and piety, were put to the torture and to death in all parts of his jurisdiction. Under the dominion of Constantine only, they were exempt from persecution. In the year 304, he was persuaded by Galerius and others to pass still another edict against them. By this, the magistrates were required to compel all Christians, of whatever age, sex, or condition, to sacrifice to the gods. This order was so cheerfully executed by the magistrates, that the slaughter of Christians was horrible, and led many of the feeble-hearted among the faithful to believe that the promise of Christ would now fail, and "the gates of hell" would prevail against the Church. The sufferings of the Church in Palestine were conspicuous. It supplied more than its share to the dismal picture, offering a multitude of martyr heroes to the sacrifice. The account of these sufferings is a wonderful exhibition of constancy and faith. With lamb-like meekness, a great number submitted to the loss of liberty, and to toil in the mines with the basest criminals. A multitude of the common people, who were beneath the notice of the persecutor, illustrated in a glorious manner the triumphs of a true faith in Christ. Some of the clergy suffered martyrdom, others were imprisoned, banished, condemned to the mines, or concealed themselves. The churches were closed, and public services were suspended. The government took possession of all Church property, and appropriated it to profane uses. Where but recently Church life abounded,

What did the clergy have to endure? Where did they alone escape? What edict was passed in the year 304? What were the consequences of this additional law? What impression fell on the minds of feeble-hearted Christians? What is said of the sufferings of the Church in Palestine? How did the sufferers endure the affliction? What is said of the clergy and churches?

and throngs attended its public worship, there now prevailed the silence of death. What added to the gloom, was the triumphant display of the heathen worship, which appeared in a dress of unusual pomp in their temples. Yet, in this land where Christianity appeared to be extinguished, no sooner did a lull come over the storm of persecution, than, like a host of the dead suddenly rising to life, Christians came forth and crowded all the places of public worship. So spontaneous and joyful was this resurrection of Christian life and zeal, that the heathen were amazed at it, and many of them were led by this circumstance to become Christians.

The Church of Antioch, though it suffered less than many others, had the honor of furnishing a goodly number of victims for the sacrifice. Lucian, a celebrated teacher in the school of Antioch, was seized and carried to Nicomedia. Here, by his heroic example and noble zeal, he restored a number who had fallen from the faith, and emboldened them to receive the martyr's crown. He was cast into prison, where he was treated with barbarous cruelty. It is said, when his brother confessors confined with him needed a table on which to celebrate the Lord's Supper, lying on his back, he offered them his breast, saying, "This breast shall be your table, and you standing round shall be my holy temple." His enemies suffered him to die of starvation. Thus lying on his back, he lingered fourteen days, then peacefully resigned his soul into the hands of God. Two ladies of rank and distin-

What effect had this persecution on public worship? What is said of the pomp of heathen worship? What took place here when persecution ceased? What effect had it on the heathen? What is said of the Church at Antioch? What is said of Lucian? How did he provide a table for his brother confessors to eat the Lord's Supper? How did he die?

guished beauty, to escape the hands of the brutal soldiery, drowned themselves.

The persecution raged with extreme severity in all parts of Egypt. The number and importance of the martyrs were greater than in any preceding persecution. They suffered in every conceivable way that the craft and malice of satan could suggest. Multitudes were put to death. A vast number were tortured in various ways. They were scourged, roasted over a slow fire, burned with melted lead, racked, hung up by the hands, their flesh torn off with pincers, and subjected to other kindred torments. Peter, bishop of Alexandria, surnamed the martyr, was beheaded in prison. He was the only bishop of this see that received the martyr's crown. Being one of the last that suffered, he has been called "the seal and end of the martyrs."

Dioctrian can claim to have dealt impartially in this horrid work, for he treated his own household with the same severity he treated strangers. He forced his wife, Prisca, and his daughter, Valeria, to sacrifice to the gods. Other members of his household were tortured over a slow fire, then put to death. In the city where he dwelt, numbers of the faithful were gathered in groups by his agents, and consumed in a ring of fire. To terrify Christians, and make them renounce the faith, he invented such modes of torture as the world had never seen.

This persecution extended to the British isles. If we may credit the statements of Bede, the venerable historian

What is said of the persecution in Egypt? In what ways were Christians tormented? How did Peter the Martyr suffer? What has he been called? How did Dioctrian treat his wife and daughter, and other members of his household? How did he deal with Christians in his own town? What is said of the British isles?

of the early English Church, many of the faithful perished there, of both sexes, whose bodies were racked and torn in a horrid manner. The most noted martyr who perished in Britain at this time was St. Alban. He was a native of the country in which he suffered, as we learn from an early poet—

“ In Britain’s isle was holy Alban born.”

He was a pagan when the persecution began. But while it was raging, a Christian minister took refuge in his house, to escape the pursuit of his enemies. Alban closely observed the conduct of the pious fugitive, and discovered that he spent nearly his whole time in solemn devotion to God. This example of faith and piety so deeply impressed him, that it resulted in his conversion to Christ. Without delay he renounced the worship of idols, and became a sincere and faithful believer in the Gospel. But the minister had not remained long in his house before the persecutors learned of the place of his concealment. The wicked prince then sent soldiers to search the house, and, if possible, to bring him to trial. When these soldiers came to his house, instead of conducting them to the room where he had concealed the fugitive, he put on the long coat worn by his concealed guest, and offered himself in his place. He was then bound and led into the presence of the heathen judge. When he entered the place of trial, the judge was standing before his altar offering sacrifices to the images of devils. The soldiers were commanded to drag him up

Give an account of the death of St. Alban. Who took refuge in his house? What influence had the example of this minister? What did the persecutors soon learn? Did Alban deliver up the minister? How did he save his spiritual father? When he appeared, what was his judge doing? What were the soldiers commanded to do?

before these horrid creatures. He was next ordered to offer sacrifices to them. He refused to obey, and boldly replied to the judge—"Whosoever shall offer sacrifices to these images, shall receive the everlasting pains of hell for his reward." This bold and terrible rebuke roused the fury of the judge, who commanded that he should be immediately scourged. But he bore the torture of the scourging with patience and joy for Christ's sake, who, under the same affliction, had set him an example of patience. When the judge saw that he could not shake his constancy by torture, he condemned him to death. As soon as the sentence was pronounced, they hastened him away to the place of execution.

The venerable Bede records several wonderful miracles that occurred on his way to execution and at the place. The soldier who conducted him was converted by these events, and the sword with which he was to behead Alban fell to the ground. He begged to be allowed to die in the place of the martyr; and if that could not be, to die with him. After the head of St. Alban had rolled from the block, the request of the converted soldier was granted, and he too was beheaded. The affecting circumstances that attended the death of these martyrs so strongly affected the mind of the judge, that he ordered the persecution in his jurisdiction to cease, and from an enemy he became a friend and admirer of the saints. This is the *tenth persecution*, and was the most severe of all.

What did Alban say of those who offered to devils? What did the judge then do? What account does Venerable Bede give of the matter? What effect had the circumstances on the soldier who conducted him? What was the end of this converted soldier? What effect had the death of these martyrs on the judge?

CHAPTER XXV.

IMPORTANT POLITICAL CHANGES.—DEATH OF TYRANTS.—CONSTANTINE.—HIS VICTORIES.—LICINIUS.—CONSTANTINE BECOMES SOLE RULER.

In the year 305, Diocletian resigned his imperial office, laid aside his crown and sceptre, and retired to an elegant retreat in Dalmatia. It is supposed that he became wearied and disgusted with the administration of his government, and this circumstance, joined with a tedious illness, induced him to abdicate. He induced Maximian, his associate in the imperial dignity, to resign at the same time, though it was done with reluctance. They both abdicated on the same day. The revolting tyrant and persecutor, Galerius, then became emperor. He abandoned himself to indulgence in the most loathsome vices, and to his unbounded malice against Christians. But God did not suffer him to indulge his evil nature long. He was brought down to his grave by that loathsome and terrible disease that ended the life of the tyrannical and persecuting Herod. A festering sore spread in his body, which became a nest of innumerable worms that nothing could expel. They literally devoured him. The whole palace became so filled with the deadly odor from his spreading sores, that none could ap-

When did Diocletian resign his office? Why? Whom did he induce to resign at the same time? Who then became chief ruler? To what did he abandon himself? Was he permitted to reign long? With what terrible disease did he die?

proach him without perilling their lives. Tortured with this terrible plague, and with that never-dying worm which appeared to have already begun its work upon his soul, he repented of having persecuted the disciples of Christ, and put an end to the persecution in the year 311. Maximin succeeded Galerius. For a short time he made a show of religious toleration, but at length became a reckless and hideous persecutor. But after perpetrating every variety of crime, most odious in the sight of God and revolting to humanity, he was defeated in battle by Licinius, his rival, and driven from his throne. Deprived of power and protection, like an uncaged and ferocious beast, he wandered wildly about, feared, hated, and cursed of all. At last, to end his wretchedness, he took poison. But, to his disappointment, it only increased his misery. The dose was not sufficient to destroy his life, but, remaining in his system, it operated like an inward fire, which gradually tortured him to death. He too, like Galerius, repented of his barbarous cruelty to Christians. With his death ended the persecution, in the year 313, having lasted ten years. The end of Maximian, who retired with Diocletian, was also disgraceful. The monuments erected to his honor were demolished, and the statues which he had made to perpetuate his fame were torn down, that no object might remain to indicate a lingering token of respect or veneration for him.

A series of political changes now took place in the government of the empire, which makes it one of the most

When? Did he repent? Who was his successor? What course did he pursue? By whom was he defeated? How did he then conduct? What was his end? Did he repent? What happy result ensued on his death? When? What was the end of Maximian? In what way was he disgraced? What is said of the political changes that took place?

stirring and exciting periods in its civil history. There were serene and happy days in reserve for the Church, whose joys would overpay all its trials and sorrows, and such days as had never before dawned upon it. The event for which the faithful had earnestly prayed, hoped, and looked, during the long night of their bitter trial and affliction, dawned in the rise of Constantine, called the Great, on account of his many and glorious deeds. His father, Constantius, had won the confidence of Christians by the protection he had extended to them, and by his meekness and courtesy. It appears that Constantine had gained the confidence of the army, and of many others who occupied places of great honor and distinction. For upon the death of his father, which occurred in Britain in the year 306, he was saluted emperor by the army, and forced to accept the imperial authority. That part of the empire fell to his share which his father had ruled. Maxentius, another of the monarchs that shared in the government of the empire, ruled at Rome. The favor and protection which Constantine had extended to Christians, drew many of them to his standard, and swelled the ranks of his army. His careful eye observed how peaceful, orderly, faithful, and brave they were, while he saw, in striking contrast, the turbulent and reckless conduct of his heathen soldiers. The noble bearing of his Christian soldiers won his admiration and confidence, and induced him to place great reliance upon them. And he soon had occasion to put their fidelity and courage to a severe trial.

What was in reserve for the Church? Under whose reign did prosperity dawn on the Church? Who was Constantine? What is said of his popularity? When did his father die? Where? What part of the empire fell to his share? Who ruled at Rome? What circumstance drew Christians to his standard? What is said of his Christian soldiers?

Maxentius, son of Maximian, the retired emperor, at this time ruled Italy and northern Africa. He is represented to have been a most odious character, his vices being kindred to those of Maximin. Female virtue, when it attracted his eye, could only escape his brutal lusts by death. He would forcibly separate wives from their husbands, and having abused them, send them back thus polluted to their husbands and families. He was guilty of conduct so infamous as to make one shudder at their bare recital. This royal monster seized the earliest pretext for a quarrel with Constantine. Nor did the latter wait to be attacked. Seeing the determination of Maxentius to force on a war, he advanced with his army rapidly towards Rome. During this march he became the avowed and bold friend of Christianity. This happy event was brought about by a circumstance truly wonderful. He saw a *cross*, at mid-day, in the heavens, as glorious as the unclouded sun, and upon it were written these words—"By this conquer." The sight of this luminous cross and its inscription greatly amazed him. His army also saw it, and were equally astonished. In the following night he saw, in a vision, the Saviour appear before him and display the same sign, who instructed him to make a standard of the cross, and gave him assurance that he would then march in triumph against his enemies. He accordingly erected a cross upon his banner, and marched forward to achieve a brilliant succession of victories. He defeated Maxentius in three successive battles; and in the last, fought under the walls of Rome,

Who was the ruler of Italy? What was the character of Maxentius? Of what infamous conduct was he guilty? With whom did he seek a quarrel? What happy event took place in Constantine's march? What wonderful sight did Constantine behold? What effect had it on him? What occurred on the following night? What did he then erect on his banner? What success attended his march?

the army of the tyrant was totally routed, and himself drowned in the Tiber while attempting to make his escape into the city. Constantine then marched triumphantly into Rome, and was received by the citizens with demonstrations of great joy. Egypt and Italy acknowledged him emperor in place of Maxentius, and he at once proclaimed religious liberty throughout his dominions. This great event occurred in the year 314, and was the most joyful one the Church had yet experienced. Christians looked upon it as the special work of a divine providence. It came so suddenly in the hour of utmost need, like the bursting out of the sun in full glory at midnight—it was such a mighty rebound from extreme sorrow and depression to rapturous joy and delight—the cup was so full, the draught so sweet and so copious, that the faithful drank to intoxication. And, strange as it appears, the heathen acquiesced. Though the Christian population were a very small minority, their joy was not interrupted. The heathen rather encouraged them in the expression of their pleasure, for they, too, had cause to rejoice. The tyranny of their rulers had proved an intolerable burden. The bloody tyrants had not even respected their friends. Their exactions had been severe and cruel to all, and all rejoiced in their deliverance. The instruments of their oppression were now removed; the main-springs of persecution were broken. The enemies of the Church had become satiated with the blood of the martyrs. Heathenism, like some huge serpent that has gorged itself with the blood and

What became of Maxentius? Of what did Constantine now become ruler? When did this event occur? What was the effect on the minds of Christians? What on the heathen? What oppression had they borne? What classes of society had their exactions affected? What had become of the sources of tyranny? What is said of heathenism?

flesh of its victim, and then lies inactive and dormant, had drunk of Christian blood until it had become a burden to itself. Truth had also done its work. Silently it had wound itself around its enemy, gradually overcoming him, till he now lay, without a struggle, at the mercy of his conqueror.

In the mean while, the aged Diocletian was a silent spectator of the mighty drama that was acting around him. But he enjoyed little of the peace and satisfaction from his retreat he had anticipated. He had figured too largely upon the stage himself, he was responsible for too many of the groans of his distressed country, his own hands were too deeply stained with the blood of the innocent, to descend peacefully to his grave. He had abdicated, but had left the government in the hands of blood-thirsty tyrants; and he did not escape the smart of the scourge he had inflicted on the people. His lovely and accomplished daughter, Valeria, widow of Galerius, was banished by the brutal Maximin. He murdered her female friends, tortured her servants, confiscated her property, and blasted her reputation. When the news of this cruel outrage reached the ears of Diocletian, he besought permission of the tyrant that his daughter might share with him his retreat, and comfort him in his old age. This request was refused. No better fortune attended his family upon the accession of Licinius. For more than a year, both his wife and daughter wandered over the land as fugitives, in the garb of peasants, the objects of general pity and sorrow.

What work had truth done? In what state was the aged Diocletian? Could he enjoy peace? Why not? Whom had he left as his successor? What was the fate of his daughter, Valeria? How did Maximin treat her? What did Diocletian request? Was his request granted? What were the sufferings of his wife and daughter under Licinius?

At last they were discovered, and seized, by the order of Licinius, beheaded, and their bodies cast into the sea. Of the last days of Diocletian there is but little reliable information. The testimony in regard to this period of his life is contradictory. By some he is said to have been part of the time insane; others say he died of dropsy; others, still, relate that his death was caused by an utter loss of ability both to sleep and eat. He lived to see Constantine the emperor of the West, and Licinius of the East, and universal toleration granted to that religion which he had aided in so bitterly persecuting.

Licinius married the sister of Constantine, and was persuaded by that great prince to unite with him in granting to their subjects perfect freedom in religious opinion. But Licinius, though he made such fair professions of friendship for his brother-in-law, and of kindly feeling and respect for Christians, was still, at heart, a cruel, corrupt, and deceitful man. He became envious of the power and glory of Constantine, and laid secret plots to murder him. But they came short of their aim. Finding he could not accomplish his purpose in a secret way, he resolved to attempt it in open conflict. He accordingly made war upon Constantine. Here he was again foiled in his designs, and was glad to sue for peace from his injured friend, by whom he was roughly handled in battle. He now remained quiet for several years. But his defeat only embittered his feelings against Constantine and towards Christians. As he was unable to gratify his malice in any

What are the different accounts of his death? What did he live to see? Whom did Licinius marry? What did Constantine persuade him to do? What was the character of Licinius? How did he treat Constantine? When he failed to destroy him in a secret way, how did he proceed? Was he successful?

other way, he became the avowed enemy of the Church, and began to persecute them. He drove them all away from his palace, and thus deprived himself of the benefit of their counsel and the blessings they invoked upon him from heaven. He next deprived all Christians in the army of military honor or promotion. Then he attacked the bishops; and at first he caused them to be murdered secretly, through fear, lest Constantine should be incensed at his barbarity, and take vengeance on him. But he became more and more daring and cruel from day to day, until he finally destroyed them openly. Some of them, with strange barbarity, he caused to be cut into small pieces and cast into the sea, as food for fishes. The horrid cruelty of his conduct drove many to seek security in caverns, forests, deserts, and mountains. But he was not allowed to indulge long in this high-handed wickedness. Constantine had a watchful eye to the interests and welfare of Christians, and, seeing them thus cruelly treated, he felt bound to stand forth as their protector. He marched against Licinius with that army which he had so often led to victory, and, in his march, the same banner of the cross waved in its glory over the van of his army. This conquering banner inspired the hearts of his soldiers with courage and enthusiasm, while it spread terror and dismay through the ranks of the enemy. Licinius was utterly defeated and subdued, and was compelled to throw himself on the mercy of the victor. But he had shown himself to

How did he next strive to gratify his malice? In what way did he persecute? Did his cruelty increase? In what barbarous way did he finally destroy Christians? Where did they take shelter? Was he suffered to persecute a long time? Who arrested him? What course did Constantine pursue? What effect had the banner of the cross? What was the end of Licinius?

be so bitter an enemy to the Church, and so dangerous a rival, that Constantine thought he was justified in putting him to death. This event occurred in the year 325, and left Constantine the sole ruler of the Roman empire.

When was he put to death?

CHAPTER XXVI.

TRIALS OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.—MONKS AND HERMITS.
—ST. ANTHONY.—DONATISTS.—CONSTANTINE'S TREATMENT OF THEM.

IN no period of Church History have the faithful needed more the benefits of that petition, "In all time of our tribulation, in all time of our prosperity, good Lord deliver us," than in the fourth century. At no time has the Church been more severely tried. The beginning of the century witnessed the longest and most terrible persecution with which it had been afflicted. Suddenly and unexpectedly, its state was changed from the lowest depression to a state of the highest prosperity; from the deepest gulf of gloom and sorrow to the summit of light and joy. These vicissitudes were violent and severe, and extremely perilous. In addition to these great trials, the Church was afflicted with the most powerful and dangerous schisms and heresies it had ever experienced. Fanaticism also abounded, and the lives and conduct of multitudes of Christians were eccentric, and repugnant to sound sense. In Africa the Church suffered most severely from these causes. The trouble began at Lycopolis, in Egypt, at the very dawn of the century. At this time this see ranked

What is said of the trials of the fourth century? What persecution was the most bitter of all? What sudden change took place? What is said of these vicissitudes? What other afflictions occurred? What is said of fanaticism? Where did the Church suffer most severely? Where did the difficulty begin?

next to that of Alexandria in influence. Meletius, its bishop, at the close of the third century, was accused of having offered sacrifice to idols. He was tried by a council assembled at Alexandria, found guilty, and deprived of his office. This decision he treated with contempt, and immediately proceeded to organize a new sect. His doctrines were essentially the same as those of the catholic body. His errors were much like those of Novatian, consisting in austere and rigid views. He attracted followers to his standard, also, by some peculiar rites. Religious dances were introduced, and he represented heaven to his followers in gross and fanciful colors. The eloquence and venerable appearance of Meletius, aided by able leaders, made his sect popular, and drew great numbers into it. Like all other sects in primitive times, this, too, had its bishops. Its founder appointed one for each of the principal sees. Arius, renowned as the father of the most pestilent heresy that ever infested the Church, for a time lent his support to this schism, not so much through sympathy for its peculiarities, as through hatred to the bishop of Alexandria. This sect survived for more than a hundred years, causing great disturbance, bitterness, and strife among Christians.

The long and terrible persecution which Constantine was the blessed instrument of stopping, increased the number of *hermits* and *monks*, and made the example of these solitary and useless Christians popular. In the year 305, St. Anthony, one of their number, organized the Egyptian

Of what was Meletius accused? What is said of his doctrines and errors? What is said of religious dances? Of the leaders? Of its bishops? Of Arius? What induced Arius to aid this schism? How long did the sect survive? What increased the number of hermits and monks? When were the Egyptian monks organized? By whom?

monks into a regular society. This father of Christian monks was blessed with pious and rich parents. He was so retiring and fond of seclusion when a child, that he was unwilling to mingle in the society of the youth of his own age, even at school. What education he received was given him in private. At twenty he was left an orphan, ignorant of the world, and without a friend or associate except one sister. Not long after the death of his parents, while at church, he heard these words—"If thou wilt be perfect, go sell that thou hast and give to the poor." Believing these words were addressed to him personally by the Spirit, he proceeded immediately to obey the instruction. Reserving only a small portion of his fortune for his sister, he sold all the rest, and gave the proceeds to the needy. Soon after this, being in church, he again heard words addressed to him—"Take no thought for the morrow." He then recollect ed that he had taken *thought* for his sister's temporal welfare. This act he was persuaded was wrong, and, to rectify the error, he sold the portion he had reserved for his sister, and gave it to the poor. He then provided for his sister in a religious house. She approved his course, and eventually became the head of a flourishing sisterhood. As he began, so he endeavored to carry out the literal precepts of the Gospel. The first fifteen years of his retirement he spent among the tombs; the next twenty, in a ruined castle, where serpents and wild beasts were his only companions. Here he battled with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and triumphed

Who was Anthony? What is said of his youth? What induced him to give his property to the poor? What reservation did he make? What did he afterwards do with his sister's portion? How did he provide for his sister? Did she approve his course? Where did he spend his time? In what way?

over them. His fame spread abroad over the land, and obliged him to show himself to a host of admirers, and to receive disciples. Before he came forth from this dismal seclusion, it was believed he must appear emaciated and haggard. But all who saw him were amazed at beholding him as vigorous, ruddy, and youthful as when he first retired. He was composed and polished in manner, and from his lips flowed the purest eloquence. To his other graces he is said to have added miracles. He abounded in love and good-will towards men, and delighted in reconciling enemies and making them friends. Such a leader was eminently fitted to make that society popular of which he was called the father. His example was followed by multitudes, and the society continued to swell, till it became numerous in all the provinces of the empire. Even the emperors and bishops encouraged them. St. Martin, the celebrated bishop of Tours, erected the first monastic order in his diocese, and encouraged its members by his instruction and example. The monks, to show their high esteem for the memory of their great episcopal patron, assembled to the number of a thousand at his funeral. But in Africa, the austerity of this order of Christians was carried to its greatest extent. Here the sultry climate and the debility of the atmosphere, tempted the body to seek repose and solitude. And as the climate was warm the year round, they suffered less from their solitary retirement and poverty than in other parts of the world. The order of monks was divided into several classes. One class was called

What is said of his fame? How did he appear when he came forth from his seclusion? What Christian graces had he? Was his example popular? What high authority encouraged the monks? What did St. Martin do? What respect was shown him at his funeral? Why did Africa abound in monks? Into how many classes were the monks divided?

Cœnobites: these lived together in fixed habitations, and made up a large community under one chief, whom they called *father*, or *abbot*, which is the same in the Egyptian language. Another class was called Eremites. They spent a wretched life in solitude, scattered abroad in caves, deserts, cavities of rocks, and protected from wild beasts by the shelter of miserable cabins. The Anchorets were yet more excessive in the austerity of their lives. They frequented the wildest deserts, without cabins or tents; fed on roots and herbs that grew spontaneously from the earth; and, without any fixed place of habitation, they wandered about, and wherever night overtook them, there they reposed the best they could. The Sarabites, yet another class, travelled from place to place, and gained their living by imposing on the ignorant and over-credulous people. They offered for sale the pretended relics gathered from the tombs of saints and other sacred places, and professed to work miracles. Many of this class of monks were extremely vicious and profligate.

It was, no doubt, a subject of painful regret to Constantine, as well as to the large body of the faithful, that he had only just taken his seat on the imperial throne at Rome when he was called upon to suppress violent feuds among Christians, of whose religion he had become the bold and triumphant vindicator. Far more congenial was it to his nature to mingle in the strife of the battle-field, than in religious strife. Gladly would he lend his aid to the Church, in forwarding her works of peace, harmony,

Describe the Cœnobites. Describe the Eremites. Describe the Anchorets. Describe the Sarabites. What did they offer for sale? What can you say of their character? What was a subject of painful regret to Constantine? Which was most congenial to his nature, strife on the battle-field or in religion? In what did he take pleasure?

and good-will among men. He would have rejoiced to find at least one place on earth where man did not quarrel nor contend; to find the Church a brotherhood, where his fellow-men ceased to fight and learned to love. But he failed in this desire. His first essay in religious strife was made in the great schism created by the Donatists. This lamentable schism arose in the African Church. In the year 311, it became necessary to elect a bishop for Carthage, in the place of Mausurius, who had died. A majority of the clergy and laity of that see elected Cæcilianus. It had been customary on former occasions, when a bishop of Carthage was to be elected, to notify the bishops of Numidia of the election, and invite them to share in the solemn services of his consecration. But on this occasion the Numidian bishops were not allowed to share in the solemn ceremony as usual. This neglect gave them serious offence, and to show their indignation, they assembled a council at Carthage, and summoned the new bishop before them, to give an account of his conduct. The fury of this flame of discord was increased by the influence of several presbyters of the city, who were jealous because they were not elected bishop instead of Cæcilianus. It was still further increased by Lucilla, a rich lady of Carthage, who was the bitter enemy of the new bishop, because he had reproved her for her superstitious practices. She encouraged his adversaries in their opposition, by infusing her own extreme bitterness into their hearts, and by distributing large sums of money among them as a reward for their unholy conduct. Encouraged in this way, the

What would have rejoiced his heart? In what religious strife did he first engage? Who were the Donatists? What was the cause of their schism? What is said of the Numidian bishops? What increased this discord? Who was Lucilla? What part did she take in this controversy?

Numidian bishops persevered in their course; and in another council, at which seventy of their own number were present, they condemned Cæcilianus, declared him unworthy of the episcopal dignity, and chose and consecrated Majorinus, one of his deacons, to fill his place. By this unchristian act, they divided the Carthaginian Church into two factions, each having its bishop. The leaders of the opposition were two bishops, both of whom were named Donatus. One of them was bishop of Casæ Nigræ, in Numidia; the other, called by his party The Great, was appointed by them to succeed Majorinus. From these leaders, the schismatic party took the name of Donatists. In the year 313, they brought their complaints before Constantine, and appealed to him to settle their difficulties. He very kindly listened to them, and appointed the bishop of Rome and three others to examine the charges they made against Cæcilianus. These bishops obeyed the instruction of the emperor, and decided that Cæcilianus was entirely innocent of the charges brought against him. The Numidian bishops were disappointed, and bitterly complained of injustice. They declared that it was a great indignity offered to them, that the judgment of only three bishops should be esteemed of more weight than that of their venerable council of seventy bishops. The emperor condescendingly listened again to their complaints, and in order to remove every reasonable cause of dissatisfaction, he called a council to consider the same subject. This

What effect had her conduct on the Numidian bishops? What council is mentioned? What was done by it? What was the consequence? Who were the leaders of the opposition? What did they do in the year 313? What course did Constantine pursue? Whom did he appoint to examine their cause? Were they satisfied? What did they complain of? Did Constantine regard their complaint? When did he assemble the council of Arles?

council assembled at Arles, in the year 314. It was composed of bishops from Italy, Germany, France, Spain, and three from Britain. After giving the subject a thorough examination, they decided also that Cæcilianus was entirely innocent of the charges alleged against him, and that he was the lawful bishop of Carthage. Yet these Numidian bishops were not satisfied. They still objected to the proceedings. Finally, they petitioned the emperor to examine the subject himself. With great patience, he indulged them even in this request, and heard them in full at Milan, in the year 316. His decision was the same as the two already given. This decision he had hoped would put an end to the trouble, and restore peace to the afflicted African Church. But he was mistaken. They now found fault with him, and charged him with partiality in favor of Cæcilianus. They were so rash and heady as to bitterly reproach him, though he had so often, and with so great patience, listened to their complaints. At length, his patience being exhausted, and being justly indignant at their wicked conduct, he deprived them of their churches, and sent their turbulent bishops into exile. This severe proceeding gave rise to violent commotions in Africa; for the party of the Donatists were numerous and powerful. It was also the origin of a society of desperate outlaws, composed of a rough and savage population. They maintained the cause of the Donatists by force of arms, and filled the African provinces with slaughter, rapine, and terror. The supporters of Cæcilianus were the special objects

Of whom was it composed? How many bishops were there from Britain? What was the decision of the council? Were they satisfied? What did the emperor next do? How did they treat him and his decision? How did he punish them for their obstinacy? What was the consequence? What desperate society was organized in consequence? What did they do? Who were the objects of their fury?

of their fury, and they inflicted on them the most horrid outrages. These bloody and vindictive desperadoes were utterly fearless of death, and when captured and compelled to undergo the severest inflictions for their crimes, they bore them with wonderful fortitude and apparent indifference. Constantine was finally persuaded, by the governors of the African provinces, to grant liberty to all to enjoy their own opinion in regard to this vexed question.

What did Constantine grant?

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONSTANTINE AS A CHRISTIAN.—COUNCIL OF NICE.—ARIUS AND HIS HERESY.—EASTER, AND OTHER QUESTIONS, SETLED.

THOUGH Constantine had not made the doctrines and principles of Christianity his careful study, yet he evidently saw the great difference there was between it and heathenism. He had observed the mighty contrast there is between these systems of religion, in the character and lives of those who supported them. He had particularly marked this in the discipline of his army. His Christian soldiers he always found to be orderly and faithful. But the brilliant success and wonderful prosperity that attended his career as he followed the cross upon his banner, and the escape he had made from the dangers and secret plottings of his enemies, to which he had been exposed—these things probably did more towards inducing him so nobly to espouse the cause of Christ, than any conviction of its truth from the actual study of its principles. Having, therefore, through the assistance of the Head of the Church, become sole monarch of the empire, and possessor of the highest place of worldly power and honor, he zealously endeavored to honor the Being who had prospered him. He applied his genius, the authority of his laws, and the charms of his liberality,

What knowledge had Constantine of Christianity? What difference had he observed in the character of his soldiers? What chiefly influenced him to espouse the cause of Christ? What did he now endeavor to do?

in restoring and building churches, in supporting the clergy and Christian institutions. In this way he endeavored to gradually blot out paganism from his empire, and extend the blessings of Christianity to every part of it. His interest in the Church was not confined to these marks of his favor and encouragement. He also took an active part in its government. In all its external affairs he was the controlling spirit. He assembled councils, presided in them, appointed judges to decide upon the merits of questions in religious controversy, and took the responsibility of settling differences when they arose between bishops, the clergy, or the laity. He also took it upon him to make the polity of the Church conform, as near as possible, to that of the State. He arranged Church affairs in harmony with political. The bishops of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch had been called leaders. The sees presided over by these bishops were considered the principal ones. After his removal from Rome to Byzantium, he added it to the three principal sees, and made its bishop the fourth of the episcopal chiefs. He likewise changed the name of the city to Constantinople, calling it after his own name. These four bishops corresponded with four leading officers of the empire. They were afterwards distinguished by the Jewish title of Patriarch. Another order of bishops he distinguished by the name of Exarchs, corresponding also with a political order. After these, came those who were called Metropolitans, next Archbishops, and the last of the episcopal order were simply called Bishops.

What means did he use? What did he wish to do with paganism? Did he take part in Church government? In what way? What did he do with Church polity? What bishops were leaders? To what city did Constantine move his capital? What honor did he then confer on this see? What change took place in the name of the city? What is said of the rulers of the Church?

The internal affairs of the Church were left to its spiritual rulers, and to the decision of councils. In the provincial councils, the interests of the Church throughout the province, religious controversies, differences of faith and practice, the forms and rites of public worship, and other subjects of like nature, composed the matter for deliberation and action. But there were some Church matters of so general interest, that a provincial council could not well settle them. The whole Church was so deeply interested in them, that all parts desired to be represented in the council that should decide upon them; and they were so important, that no province wished to take the responsibility of their decision. In order to determine upon these general affairs with satisfaction to all, the emperor assembled the first general council of the Church. It was held at Nice, the capital of Bithynia, in the year 325. The subjects of its deliberation, and its acts, render it truly famous. There were assembled at this council three hundred and eighteen bishops. The subjects that were then disturbing the peace and prosperity of the Church were thoroughly examined in all their bearings, and finally decided upon by a vote of the members of the council. Among these agitating questions, the most important was the heresy of Arius, which had already disturbed the Church six years. Arius was the father of this heresy, and the chief cause of the dreadful evils that arose from it. He was a learned and eloquent presbyter of Alexandria, and is said to have been disappointed in not being elected

Who managed the internal affairs of the Church? What composed the subject of deliberation in the provincial councils? Could a provincial council settle all matters of dispute? How did the emperor meet this difficulty? Where was the first general council assembled? What subjects were examined? Which was most important? Who was Arius?

bishop of that see. Alexander was preferred before him, and consecrated bishop. Because of this defeat, he became the enemy of Alexander, and published those erroneous doctrines which caused so great commotion throughout the Christian world. He taught that Christ, the Son, was totally distinct from the Father; that he was not God, but only a creature, though the first and noblest that God had made, and therefore inferior in nature and dignity to the Father. When these opinions were published, Alexander accused him of impiety and heresy, and in two councils, held at Alexandria, his doctrines were examined and condemned, and by the last he was expelled from the communion of the Church. When this sentence was pronounced, he withdrew from the city, but continued to spread the poison of his sentiments, and disturb the harmony of the Church. It was for the purpose of putting an end to this, and other causes of contention, that Constantine assembled the council of Nice. He hoped that here all these questions would be settled, and all strife and bitterness arising from their agitation would be removed for the future. A fair opportunity was given to the members of the council to present their opinions and be heard. This privilege was granted to Arius also, and his party, and to any who favored his opinions. His opinions occupied the attention of the Council a long time, and excited a warm and animated discussion. At last they were condemned as heretical: Christ was declared to be the divine Son of God, and in his divinity to be equal with the Father. Then was

What was the cause of his jealousy and schism? To what extent did he disturb the Church? What errors in doctrine did he hold? How did Alexander, his bishop proceed? When condemned, what did Arius do? Why did Constantine assemble the first general council? What course was pursued at the council? Did Arius have an opportunity to defend himself? How were his opinions treated?

framed that creed which has rendered this council the most famous of its kind, called the *Nicene Creed*. This creed was received by the whole Church as the true expression of its faith, and was never afterwards altered or amended by any general council. At the same time this vexed question was decided upon, other important differences were settled. The question when the festival of Easter should be celebrated—a question which had so long vexed the Church, and caused so much bitter controversy between the eastern and western Churches—was settled. The practice of the Churches in Asia was abolished, and that of the West adopted everywhere. The subject which had been the cause of so much trouble in the diocese of St. Cyprian, in Rome and elsewhere, relative to restoring those to the communion of the Church who had denied Christ in time of persecution, was likewise composed. For a long time many Christians had labored to make the practice of celibacy general among the clergy. On the occasion of this council, an attempt was made to have some action taken to require all the clergy to adopt this practice. But it was defeated by the unanimous voice of the council.

Besides these agitating questions, others of less moment were put to rest. Constantine presided in person, showing throughout the profoundest interest in all its proceedings. He encouraged a free and full discussion of the various subjects that occupied the attention of the council. It was held in the central and largest apartment in the palace.

What creed was framed? What great doctrine confirmed? What decision was made on the Easter question? What was done about the question of denying Christ? What was done about celibacy? What is said of other questions? Who presided at this council? Did he encourage a free discussion? Where was the council held?

On the day appointed for its opening, all who were to represent the Church were present in this room. Here they awaited the arrival of the emperor. When it was announced that he was approaching, all arose to receive him. His attendants and particular friends entered, and he followed, gorgeously robed in purple, and resplendent with pearls, gems, and gold. The attractions of his person were heightened by the majesty of his bearing, his commanding figure—being taller and more robust than those around him—his condescending and courteous manner, the religious awe with which he was inspired, and his expression of blushing modesty. When he had reached the upper end of the hall, he remained standing until the bishops requested him to be seated. He then occupied a small chair, burnished with gold, prepared for his accommodation. The bishop who was seated at his right then addressed him in behalf of the assembled council, and paid him a glowing tribute of respect. In reply, he deliberately addressed the assembly in terms expressive of confidence and respect, and signified his great pleasure in seeing the Church so well represented. The council then proceeded to business.

Under such royal patronage, the Church prospered exceedingly. The restraints with which it had been hitherto bound, were now removed. Every human aid was afforded to enable it to advance in the conquest of a sinful world. The assistance which the great emperor rendered it, removed the odium which attached to the Christian name;

How did the bishops receive the emperor? How was he robed? What is said of his appearance? Describe the ceremony of opening the council. Who addressed the emperor? How did the emperor reply? How did the Church succeed under this royal patronage? What effect had it on the name of Christian?

and from an object of contempt, the follower of Christ became the most respectable personage of the land. As the pagan world saw the brilliant conqueror advance in his triumphs over all his foes, beneath the Christian banner; saw the disciplined hosts of their own religion, vastly superior in numbers, give way and yield before him, they were led to doubt the ability of their gods to render them essential aid and protection. This state of doubt, and the popularity, zeal, laws, and liberal expenditure of money used by Constantine in support of the cause of truth, produced mighty results, extending the bounds of the kingdom of our Lord, and converting whole nations to Christ. In the last century, the work of conversion began among the Goths. Now it was carried on with great success, and multitudes were brought into the kingdom.

Frumentius, a zealous and brave Christian teacher of Alexandria, went into the distant Ethiopia, and preached the Gospel with great success. He converted and baptized the king of the country and several of his nobles, and then, returning to Alexandria, he was ordained bishop of Ethiopia.

By a singular circumstance, the religion of Christ was introduced into a province of Asia, now called Georgia. A Christian female was taken captive during the reign of Constantine, and carried to that land. Through the influence of the holy life and conversation she exhibited, and the miracles she is represented to have performed, the king and queen were induced to forsake their idols, and embrace

What effect had the triumphs of Constantine on the heathen mind? What is said of the effects of the emperor's favors to the Church? What is said of the progress of the Gospel among the Goths? What is said of Frumentius? Where was he made bishop? How was Christianity introduced into Georgia? By what means did she convert the king and queen?

the truths of the Gospel. They then sent to Constantinople to obtain proper Christian teachers, to give them and their people instruction in the way of salvation through Christ. In this manner did the faith of the Christian diffuse itself among the nations.

How did they obtain Christian teachers ?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GREAT WRITERS.—EUSEBIUS.—ATHANASIUS.—HIS PERSECUTION.—CONSTANTINE FAVORS ARIUS.—DEATH OF ARIUS.—DEATH OF CONSTANTINE.

At this time the Church was blessed with the services of several writers of great ability. Among these, Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine, is justly celebrated. He was a favorite with the emperor, and corresponded with him. The honor was conferred on him of opening the council of Nice. His valuable history of the Church is familiar to every student of ecclesiastical history. Besides this, he was the author of other valuable works.

Another writer of this age, who should be remembered with gratitude and honor through all time, was Athanasius. He was one of the greatest lights the Church can boast, and his deserved fame will always distinguish him as one of the brightest ornaments with which she has been adorned. He received holy orders from Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, and was his private secretary before he was made bishop. While he was thus employed, Alexander took him with him, as a companion, to the council of Nice. Here there was a demand for his learning, great abilities, and fortitude. He won the admiration of that

What is said of the writers of this period? Who was Eusebius? What is said of him? What other writer is mentioned with highest respect? What is said of him? From whom did he receive holy orders? How was he at first employed? Where did he go with his bishop?

august assembly, by his able vindication of truth and refutation of error. His influence had great weight in favor of the decrees that were passed. But in the use of his powers so successfully against the Arian heresy, he brought down upon him the hatred of that party, who ever after exerted themselves to the utmost to do him harm. Upon the death of Alexander, he was ordained as his successor in that see. In this high position, he employed much of his time and ability in defending the faith, especially the doctrine of the Trinity. But he did not long enjoy the peaceful possession of his office. For, about five years after the banishment of Arius and the condemnation of his doctrines, a total change took place in the mind of Constantine relative to him and his heresy. From an enemy, he became his friend and the advocate of his principles. He no longer looked upon him as an enemy to the Church, but as a person who had suffered from the unjust resentment of his enemies. This change in his opinion was effected through the influence of a presbyter who supported the doctrines of Arius. This presbyter had been recommended to the favor of Constantine by the dying words of his sister Constantia. He succeeded in convincing the emperor that Arius had been unjustly condemned, and that the severe treatment he had received was the result of the jealousy and malice of his enemies. Acting upon this conviction, Constantine recalled Arius from banishment in the year 330. Being now restored to the royal favor, and allowed the liberty to advocate his principles, he used his

How did he distinguish himself there? What was the consequence? What happened on the death of Alexander? Did he enjoy his office undisturbed? What change took place in the mind of Constantine? How was this change brought about? What did Constantine do? What course did Arius pursue upon his restoration?

power, in conjunction with his party, which was powerful, to vex and oppress the supporters of the acts passed against him at the council of Nice. Athanasius was the particular object of his hatred, and suffered most from his resentment. Constantine, himself, severely tried his integrity. For when he had repealed the laws that were passed against Arius, he required Athanasius to restore him to the communion of the Church, and to the official station he had occupied before he was expelled. This the conscience of the fearless bishop would not allow him to do. He promptly and positively refused to comply with the order. Charges were then brought against him by the Arians, to drive him from his diocese. But he convinced the emperor that their charges were without foundation, and he received in return an approval of his conduct. Foiled in this attempt, his enemies laid another plot to accomplish their end. They persuaded the emperor to assemble a council at Tyre, to consider the charges preferred against him. This council was composed of Arian bishops, and, of course, he could expect no justice from them. Yet he boldly appeared in his own defence, and proved that the witnesses who testified against him were not worthy of credit. He then requested them to postpone their decision until he could bring additional witnesses. This request was denied him, and they became so furious towards him that he was in danger of suffering violence at their hands. His friends, seeing his danger, succeeded in rescuing him from their power, and bore him

Who was the particular object of his hatred? What did the emperor require of Athanasius? Did Athanasius comply? How did the Arians then proceed? Did the emperor sustain him? What did the Arians next do? Of whom was the council composed? Did they allow him to bring in more witnesses?

away. This Arian council then proceeded, in his absence, to find him guilty, and condemn him. Having succeeded thus far, they next persuaded Constantine to send him into banishment. In this way they succeeded in forcing him to leave his attached clergy and people, and the responsible charge of which the Lord had made him overseer. For two years he was compelled to remain at a distance from his diocese, during which time it was deprived of Episcopal care. Before this Arian council closed at Tyre, its members proceeded, in a solemn manner, to restore themselves to the communion of the catholic Church.

Though they had succeeded in driving the bishop of Alexandria from his see, yet Arius, their chief, was not restored. The people were as resolute and determined as their bishop, and refused to give him a place among their presbyters. When the emperor saw that he must fail in his attempt to have Arius restored to the diocese from which he had been expelled, he invited him to Constantinople, his own city, and ordered Alexander, its bishop, to admit him to the communion of the Church. This order filled the mind of that patriarch with the greatest sorrow. He was assured that Athanasius had pursued the right course, and that Arius was unworthy and unfit to be received into the body and fellowship of the faithful. Hence his mind was filled with the most painful apprehensions, should he be guilty of so great impiety as to receive again into the communion of the Church a man who had

What did they do in his absence? What did they succeed in persuading Constantine to do? How long was he banished from his diocese? What else did this Arian council do? Was Arius restored to communion at Alexandria? Did the people sustain Athanasius? What did the emperor do? What did he order the bishop of Constantinople to do? What effect had it on his mind? Of what was he assured? What was his opinion of Arius?

been the cause of so much agitation by his erroneous doctrines ; and especially since his heresy, which he still cherished and propagated, had been condemned by a general council. Under this bitter trial his only help was in the arm of the Lord, who “heareth the cry of the righteous.” Incessant prayer was made by the holy man and his faithful people, that God would send a timely deliverance to his Church and preserve it from pollution. Arius had now arrived at Constantinople, and the day was fixed by the emperor when he should be received to the bosom and fellowship of the Church. His friends were full of joy at the prospect of the restoration, and were anticipating how much they should enjoy the triumph of their chief. Great preparations were made by them to celebrate the event in a manner becoming its importance. As the day drew near, their confidence and joy increased. In the mean while the prayers of the patriarch and of his devoted clergy and people grew more and more earnest, that the Lord would vindicate the honor of his Church. Nor were their prayers offered in vain. When all things were prepared for the celebration of the event of his restoration, and the day was at hand, Arius was smitten with a dreadful and mortal disease, and suddenly died. This event was considered by the faithful as a special interposition of divine Providence in behalf of the Church ; but by the Arians it was believed his death was caused by poison. His death occurred in the year 336.

Where did he alone find relief? To whom did he and his people appeal? Where was Arius at this time? How did his friends feel? What preparations did they make? What further is said of the patriarch and his friends? Did God hear them? What happened to Arius? How did the faithful look upon this event? How did the Arians account for his death? When did it occur?

The illustrious reign of Constantine stayed the hand of the persecutor in all parts of the empire, and the tide of prosperity and joy reached, in its flood, the shores of the British isles. The Church here had shared in the anguish of the long and terrible persecution under Diocletian. Many of the faithful had received the martyr's crown amidst the most excruciating torments, with unshaken fidelity. Her holy temples had been defiled and destroyed; the voice of prayer and praise had ceased to be heard in many a consecrated place, and multitudes had fled for refuge to solitary places. But as soon as the reign of peace began, they came forth from the forest, the cave, and the mountain, whither they had fled, and with renewed zeal and courage labored to redeem the time they had lost, in extending the triumphs of the Gospel. They restored the ruined churches and erected new ones; they remembered with painful pleasure and with gratitude the deaths of their blessed martyrs, and paid to their memories a deserved tribute. They again celebrated their festivals and fasts, and performed, with clean hands and pure hearts, the sacred rites of our holy religion. This state of prosperity and peace continued in the early English Church until the poison of the Arian heresy spread westward from Egypt and reached these distant island shores. As elsewhere, so here, this pestilent and fatal error was the cause of great trouble and harm to the Church.

What is said of the British Church? What sufferings had it endured? Where did the faithful find safety? When they came forth from these hiding-places what did they do? What did they do to the churches? How did they treat the memory of martyrs? How long did this state of peace continue in the British Church? Did the Arian heresy trouble it?

The character of Constantine the Great, though illustrious, is not destitute of dark shades. When he was firmly seated on his throne, the sole ruler of the empire, and without apprehension from any rival power, his character seems to have degenerated. He dimmed the glory of his reign by deeds of cruelty. The death of Lycinius, his brother-in-law, after he had conquered him and deprived him of power, has been recorded against him as an act of jealous cruelty. He has also been charged with the unnatural crimes of jealousy and cruelty to his own son. His last days were far from being happy or peaceful. His mind is represented to have been disturbed by frightful visions, and his palace haunted by avenging and terrifying spirits. Though he had been the instrument of God, of raising the Church from a state of indescribable suffering, affliction, and sorrow, to a state of peace, honor, and wonderful prosperity, yet he drew from that divine society which in many ways he had so highly honored, tears of regret for his errors and sins, which must tarnish the glory of his name while history endures. He remained a catechumen till near the close of his life, and was then baptized. He died at his villa near Nicomedia, in the year 337, aged sixty-three years.

What is said of the imperfections of the character of Constantine? How did he tarnish the glory of his reign? Of what crimes was he charged? What is said of his last days? How did his errors and faults affect the Church? How long did he remain a catechumen? Where did he die? When?

CHAPTER XXIX.

SONS AND SUCCESSORS OF CONSTANTINE.—ATHANASIUS.—DONATISTS SEVERELY DEALT WITH.—CORRUPTION OF THE CHURCH.—COUNCIL OF SARDICA ADVANCES THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF THE ROMAN BISHOP.

UPON the death of Constantine, his three sons, Constantine Second, Constantius, and Constans, succeeded to the government. They each bore the title of emperor. Constantius ruled the eastern portion of the empire, and the western was divided between his brothers. They all followed the example of their father in the protection and encouragement of Christianity. They mutually endeavored to make its triumphs complete over paganism. But neither of them possessed the remarkable abilities of his father; and in their religious opinions there was an essential difference. Constantius was a zealous supporter of the Arian heresy, while Constantine and Constans were equally zealous supporters of the true faith expressed in the Nicene Creed. The consequences of this difference were deplorable; for it gave rise to bitter hatred, tumults, treacherous plots, acts of violence and injustice. Opposing councils were held, and what was done by one was con-

Who succeeded on the death of Constantine? What portions of the empire did they each rule? What were their religious principles? Did they possess the abilities of their father? What difference existed in their religious opinions? What were the consequences?

denmed by another. This state of things threw the Church into great commotion, and estranged the hearts of its members, while it drew down upon it the reproach of the heathen.

In the midst of this confusion, the fearless and persecuted Athanasius stands forth as an object of peculiar interest. He was recalled from banishment, whither he had been sent by Constantine the Great. For nearly two years, his faithful flock had stood firmly to the faith, though they had during that time been deprived of the oversight of their chief shepherd. They were exceedingly rejoiced by his return. Their joy, however, was soon converted into sorrow. Their sainted bishop, who had already suffered so much in defence of the truth, enjoyed his restoration but a short time before his enemies took occasion to again disturb the happy union. At an Arian council held at Antioch, composed of ninety of their bishops, he was again condemned, and once more forced to leave his diocese. But an opposing council of one hundred bishops, sound in the faith, was held at Alexandria, by which he was declared to be innocent of the charges laid against him by the Arian council.

In the mean while, the Donatists, in Africa, kept the Church in commotion in that country; and that desperate band of outlaws who took their part continued to perpetrate the most horrid crimes. They plundered and murdered, and committed other outrages, with unmerciful fury. Constans, to whose share of the empire Africa had

What influence had this state of things on the Church? What further is said of Athanasius? How long had he been absent from his Church? How long was he permitted to remain with his people? What opposing councils are mentioned? What were their numbers and decisions? What further is said of the Donatists and their influence? What of the outlaws?

fallen, endeavored to persuade the Donatists to agree to terms of peace with the catholics, and thus restore the Church again to peace and harmony. But the leading bishops of their party firmly and violently opposed every attempt at reconciliation. The emperor, therefore, determined to pursue a more decided course, and adopt more stringent measures. He sent one of his generals with an army against the outlaws. He met and overpowered their forces in battle, which so humbled and dispirited the Donatists, that their power rapidly declined. Severe measures were employed to bring them in subjection to law and order. To avoid these severities, many of them sought security in flight. Others were taken, and sent into banishment, among whom was Donatus himself, their leader.

The zealous, generous, and splendid support which Constantine and his sons gave to Christianity, made it popular. Then the tares sprang up amidst the wheat in much greater abundance than ever before. The desire of being popular, the prospect of getting worldly honor, the hopes of gaining wealth, all served to bring multitudes into the Church who were unworthy to be numbered with the faithful. Indulgence in pride, in the vain pomp and vanity of the world, and in unholy ambition, were the sad fruits of such accession. The severe discipline of earlier times, which had served successfully to keep the Church pure, was now greatly relaxed, and did its office partially and poorly. Those who were esteemed great, were too

What attempt did Constans make to reconcile religious differences? What course did their leading bishop pursue? How did Constans humble them? What was the effect on the Donatists? What was done with Donatus and others? What made the Church popular? What was the result? What is said of the severe discipline of earlier times?

often permitted to commit sins with impunity, which, in times of general and more severe discipline, would have received the severest censures of the Church. In the mean while, the poor and humble were required to submit to all the severity of former discipline.

The mingling of heathen fictions with the doctrines of the Gospel, resulted in an excessive veneration for the departed saints. Sometimes the Lord's Supper was administered at their tombs. Prayers were offered *for* the blessed Virgin Mary and other saints, but they were not yet offered *to* them. The image of the Saviour was erected in some churches, but no adoration was paid to it.

Before this time, the bishop of Rome had been considered the first in rank; and now his wealth, grandeur, and power rapidly increased. His spiritual power and dignity remained, as heretofore, on equality with other bishops. No prelate admitted that he had or could receive any more or better authority from the bishop of Rome than from any other lawful bishop. Even his acknowledged superiority in rank was now about being rivalled by another prelate, whose circumstances were similar to those of his own, and which had secured for him his temporal promotion. This was the patriarch of Constantinople. It was the pride of Constantine, and his successors in the East, to make the new imperial city in every way equal to Rome. They considered it the heart of the empire, and around it they wished to throw all the grandeur, dignity, and importance possessed by the imperial Rome. An important

What were those high in place permitted to do? How were the poor and humble treated? What caused an excessive veneration for departed saints? What superstitious practice was indulged at their tombs? What respect was paid the blessed Virgin? What is said of the Saviour's image? What of the bishop of Rome? What of his spiritual power? What bishop now rivalled his temporal power? How did this happen?

part of this dignity consisted in raising its bishop to an equality in rank with the Roman. While at first he ranked as the fourth in order of the patriarchs, he now ranked above those of Alexandria and Antioch, and next to Rome. This promotion of the bishop of Constantinople excited a feeling of jealousy in the minds of the other three, and especially in that of the Roman, who began to fear that his rank would be equalled or surpassed by that of the prelate of the new royal see. Nor was this spirit of emulation and desire to be the greatest confined to the highest in rank. It prevailed to a sad extent throughout the whole body of the clergy. Very many, of every degree, became proud and ambitious of station. This evil was greatly promoted by the addition which the first Christian emperor made to the benefices of the clergy. The generous support which was given them, tempted to an indulgence in luxury and ease. As the bishops became rich and worldly, their ambition increased to enlarge the extent of their authority. They gradually deprived the laity of the rights they had enjoyed from the times of the Apostles, until they finally withheld from them all voice in Church affairs. They also invaded the rights of the presbyters, and deprived them of much of their lawful power and authority.

The council held at Sardica, in the year 347, took the first step towards granting the bishop of Rome a superior degree of spiritual dignity and power over other bishops. This beginning of spiritual superiority was the result of a

How did the patriarch of Constantinople rank? What effect had this on the mind of the bishop of Rome? Was this ambition confined to bishops? What circumstance encouraged this ambition? What was the object of episcopal ambition? Of what did they deprive the laity? What did they do to the presbyters? What memorable act was done at the council of Sardica? When was this council held?

deep and fervent sympathy for the persecuted Athanasius. When he was driven from his diocese the second time, one hundred bishops assembled at Alexandria, pronounced him innocent, and the rightful bishop of that see. This decision, however, failed to restore him. He then appealed to Rome. In answer to this appeal, Julius, who was then bishop of that city, decided with the hundred bishops that Athanasius was innocent. But this opinion was not sufficient to effect a change in the state of the persecuted bishop. It needed the approval of a general council. Accordingly, one was assembled at Sardica, which it was intended should be general. But a schism that occurred in the council prevented its being general. At this council, however, the decision given by that at Alexandria and by Julius was confirmed by a vote of a majority of the bishops. Its members were divided into two factions; part were catholics, and part Arians. They acted separately. The Arians, being exceedingly incensed against Julius because he had pronounced Athanasius innocent of the charges they had made against him, proceeded to excommunicate him for having made such a decision. On the contrary, the sympathy of the orthodox portion of the council, which was much more numerous, was so strong in favor of the decision of Julius, that, in the heat of their excited feelings, they not only sustained his decision, but granted him in their haste a power which, in subsequent years and calmer hours, they would gladly have undone. They gave any bishop the privilege, when he had been

What gave rise to this beginning of papal supremacy? What additional trials of Athanasius are mentioned? What avail was the opinion of Julius? What was the object of the council of Sardica? What prevented it from being general? What decision was confirmed? How was the council divided? What incensed the Arians? Of what hasty act and error were the orthodox guilty?

condemned by his neighbor bishops, to appeal to Julius; and they empowered him to order a new trial, or not, as he saw fit. They also granted the bishop of Rome the privilege, when any bishop had been condemned or deposed, to order the case to be reconsidered before another one was consecrated in his place.

After this council had closed its session, Athanasius once more returned to Alexandria and the discharge of his episcopal duties. At the same time, other banished bishops, who had been driven away from their dioceses by the Arians, were restored, and the Church enjoyed a short season of quiet from the influence of this evil. While in session, the council of Sardica approved the Nicene Creed. The Arians were so far influenced by its decision; as to acknowledge that the charges they had preferred against Athanasius were groundless, and to confess the injustice with which he had been treated.

In what way did they elevate the spiritual power of the bishop of Rome? What happened to Athanasius after this council? What is said of other banished bishops? What other act was done by this council? What confession was made by the Arians?

CHAPTER XXX.

CIVIL WARS.—ATHANASIUS.—JULIAN THE APOSTATE.—
JOVINIAN.—ARIANS.—VALENTINIAN AND VALENS.

WHILE the Church was undergoing these trials of internal agitation, bloody and desperate deeds were acting between the emperors. Constantine II. began his reign by an act of inhuman cruelty. Many persons, in whose veins flowed royal blood, and who, he feared, might aspire to his throne, though they were his relatives, and innocent of any such design, he caused to be put to death, his imperial brothers co-operating. Ambition was added to cruelty, and he soon began to trespass on the rights of his brother Constans, and forcibly seized portions of his part of the empire. This brought on a war between the two brothers, in the year 340, in which Constantine was killed. By this event, the whole of the West came under the rule of Constans. But he had not long enjoyed the government of his enlarged territory, when he suffered a tragical death. Magnentius, one of his generals, rebelled against him, proclaimed himself emperor, and barbarously murdered him in his bed. This barbarous act was soon revenged upon the rebellious general. It called down upon the head of its bloody perpetrator the wrath and ven-

What is said of the conduct of the emperors? What of the cruelty of Constantine II.? How did he treat his brother emperors? What was his end? What was the fate of Constans? Who was Magnentius?

geance of Constantius, the remaining brother. He was driven to the severest straits. With a few soldiers around him, he fled for his life. But he was unable to escape. His guard of soldiers turned against him, and were about to deliver him into the hands of the emperor. With this intention, they surrounded the house where he had taken shelter with a few of his friends and relatives. Finding it impossible to escape, he first slew his friends that were with him, and then killed himself with his own sword, in the year 353. This event made Constantine undisputed ruler of the whole empire. But he exercised his power in a cruel and oppressive manner. The Arians were also emboldened by this circumstance, since the sole ruler of the empire was of their party. Their hatred towards the orthodox, and especially towards Athanasius, instead of abating, actually increased at every defeat they sustained. Having the power in their hands, they renewed their persecution of the great champion of the Nicene Creed. At two of their councils, held, the one at Arles, and the other at Milan, they once more condemned him. But the faithful and fearless patriarch disregarded their decisions, and refused to forsake his charge again, unless the emperor expressly commanded him to do so. He continued in the faithful discharge of his duties, until one day, when preparing to celebrate a festival in church, a body of soldiers suddenly rushed in to make him prisoner. But the presbyters and monks who were present assisting their bishop, rescued him, and conducted him to a place of safety. He

What was his end? Where was he driven? What did his guard of soldiers do? How did he escape their hands? Who was now the sole ruler? How did he exercise his power? How did the Arians conduct? How did they treat Athanasius? What two councils did they hold? What was their object? How did the patriarch treat their decisions? To what violence was he exposed? How was he delivered?

then retired into the deserts of Egypt. Yet his enemies, inspired with deadly malice, pursued him to his solitary retreat. To make sure of their prey, they offered a reward to any person who would deliver him into their hands. The hermits, however, with whom he had taken refuge, and who kept him concealed, could not be induced by any bribe to betray him. But to relieve them from the danger to which they were exposed on his account, he refused any longer to receive their protection, and boldly ventured, at the risk of his life, to seek his own safety, relying on the aid and support of that good Providence, which had so often delivered him from the hands of his enemies. He fled into a part of the desert that was entirely solitary, and far from any human habitation. To this lonely retreat he was followed by one faithful servant, who supplied him with sufficient food to maintain his life, though in doing so he exposed himself to great danger. In this deep solitude he spent his time in writing for the encouragement of the faithful, in defence of the truth, and in confounding the supporters of error.

The Arians now believed themselves firmly established in power. They agreed that the first exercise of this power could not be better used than in destroying the Nicene Creed. They accordingly planted their batteries against this strongest bulwark of the catholic faith. To accomplish its destruction the more surely, they prepared a creed to supply its place, which they so worded as to first satisfy themselves, and which they believed would be re-

What then did he do? Did his enemies still pursue him? Who concealed him? Did he continue to receive their protection? Where did he finally conceal himself? Who followed him to his solitude? How did he spend his time? What hope sustained the Arians? What did they attempt to do? How did they proceed to destroy the Nicene Creed?

ceived by the catholics, under the pressure of their superior power. In publishing this creed, they professed an earnest desire that it would succeed in bringing about a reconciliation of the opposing parties, and once more restore peace to the Church. Their plan and course of procedure were cheerfully approved by the Arian emperor Constantius, and a council was called at Araminum, in Italy, to consider the matter. It assembled in the year 359, and was attended by four hundred bishops. The majority of this council, either deceived by the ambiguous language used in the new creed, or terrified by the threats of the emperor and the Arians, gave their assent to it. But it was not long after their timorous and hasty act, that they who had been deceived or frightened into it discovered what a mistake they had made. They were helped in discovering their error by the boasts which the Arians made over their triumph, and the different construction they put on their new creed from what was expected. At the earliest opportunity, they united in restoring the Nicene Creed to the place it had occupied as the true expression of the catholic faith, confessing that they had acted most unadvisedly.

Constantius ruled the empire alone for several years, but finding its burden too great, he chose his cousin, Julian, now the only surviving member of the Constantine family, as his associate. He gave him the title of Caesar, and appointed him ruler of the provinces of Gaul. Julian

What plan did they adopt? Was it approved by Constantius? What council was held? When? How many bishops were present? What did the majority do? What influenced them? Did the orthodox who had been deceived regret this step? Did the Arians exult? What did the orthodox now do? Did Constantine rule the empire alone? Whom did he associate with him?

being thus invested with the government of a part of the empire, aspired to the dignity of emperor. With an army faithful to his interests, he marched upon Constantinople. Constantine advanced to meet him, but died on the way, before the two armies had measured their strength in battle. This event occurred in the year 361, and Julian was immediately proclaimed emperor at Constantinople. He had been baptized and educated in the Christian faith, and had served as Scripture reader in the church at Nicomedia. But he became estranged from the faith in which he was educated, and finally became an avowed and subtle enemy of Christianity. This change in his faith was attributed to the conduct of his imperial cousin, aided by heathen craft and philosophy. His cousins, through jealousy, had murdered his father, his brother, and other relatives. This awakened in his mind hatred and disgust towards their principles, which was inflamed by the learned and crafty heathen, who flattered his vanity, and predicted great things for himself and his empire. When he ascended the throne, he appeared desirous to deal moderately in matters of religious faith. But he soon showed how thoroughly he hated the religion of Christ. The churches were deprived of their revenues, and those who had aided in pulling down the heathen temples were commanded to assist in rebuilding them again. He disabled Christians from holding any office, civil or military, and took from them other privileges which free citizens were allowed to enjoy. This course encouraged the hea-

Was Julian contented with his title and province? How did he repay Constantius? Did he gratify his ambition? What change took place in his religious principles? What was the cause of this change? What barbarous acts had his cousins done? What course did he first pursue? How did he commence his persecution?

then with the hope of regaining all they had lost under the reign of the Christian emperors. In some places they became very bold, and began to resort to their old habit of persecution. They tortured, imprisoned, and even put Christians to death. But Julian had given them no authority to commit these outrages, and he endeavored to prevent them. The history of ten violent persecutions had taught him that Christianity could not be exterminated in this way. And it may have been repugnant to his feelings to shed blood for religion's sake. Yet it was the profoundest wish of his heart that the terrible struggle now going on between Christianity and heathenism would end in the triumph of the latter. There is no doubt he used the best means to accomplish his wish that lay in his power. "Divide and conquer," was his maxim. He endeavored to weaken the Church by creating division and discord in its body. Thus it would help to destroy itself. In the mean time he would bring to bear upon it all the learning, art, and sophistry the heathen could command. In this way he hoped to succeed in overturning and destroying the kingdom of our Lord. In the prosecution of his design, he encouraged heretics and schismatics to kindle afresh the flames of strife and hatred among Christians, and so weaken and disgrace the Church. The Donatists, whom Constantine had sent into exile because of their turbulent disposition and shameful violation of law and order, were now recalled and restored to liberty. They immediately renewed the con-

What encouragement did this afford the heathen? To what extremes did they go in some instances? What was Julian's opinion of persecution to death? What was his highest wish? Could he have used better means to effect his end? How did he endeavor to weaken the Church? What was his plan to destroy Christianity? How did he treat the Donatists? Did they renew the conflict?

flict which they had been compelled to stop, and once more involved the African Church in strife and commotion. He now conceived a bold plan to demonstrate that Christianity was a falsehood. The prophecies concerning Jerusalem and the Jews he knew taught that the city and temple could not be rebuilt in his day. He therefore resolved to prove that this prediction was false, by having the temple rebuilt. In prosecuting this plan, he invited all Jews, wherever they had been dispersed, to assemble on Mount Zion, where their fathers had worshipped in ancient times. The person whom he appointed to execute this daring and profane design was Alypius, the former governor of Britain. Every means was used by the emperor and the Jews to make the attempt successful. But the wicked project met with an awful defeat. While Alypius was engaged in vigorously pushing on the work, and the governor of the province was lending his aid, balls of fire, bursting forth from the earth in terrible fury close to the foundations, burned the workmen, drove them from their labor, and compelled them to entirely abandon the attempt.

At the beginning of his reign, Julian gave permission to those bishops who had been banished by the Arians to return and exercise their office as they had formerly done. This decree having reached the ears of Athanasius in his solitary retreat, he immediately returned to Alexandria, after an absence of seven years. His people were surprised

What plan did he adopt to prove Christianity false? Whom did he employ to conduct the work? Did his project succeed? What happened to the workmen? What miracle prevented the workmen from executing the plan? What privileges did Julian grant to the banished bishops? Upon the receipt of this news, what did Athanasius do? How long had he been absent? How did his people receive him?

and overjoyed at his sudden appearance among them. Soon after his return he assembled a council at Alexandria, and confirmed the Nicene Creed. He chose this way of expressing his gratitude to God for enabling him to triumph over all his foes, and for the preservation of His sacred truth. He now applied himself with renewed zeal and devotion to the spiritual interests of his diocese. By the powerful and faithful efforts he made, he drew away the heathen from their temples and kept them always empty. This called forth against him the bitter complaints of their priests. They informed Julian how successful he was in attracting the votaries of the gods from their temples, and prayed him to interfere in defence of his deities and religion. This information roused the hatred of the emperor against Athanasius, and he took revenge by sending him into banishment. The sainted bishop was again compelled to fly for his life. But the trial of parting with his people was extremely painful. They wept about him overwhelmed with sorrow, and would scarce allow him to depart. In this trying hour the greatness of his soul displayed itself. He bowed with meek submission to the Divine will, and addressed his afflicted clergy and people with words of encouragement and hope. He exhorted them to be faithful, and assured them that the Lord would still enable him to triumph, and that he should be again restored to them.

In his conflict with Christianity, there was another powerful weapon which Julian did not fail to use. He encouraged the most learned of the heathen to write with

How did he employ himself? What success had he among the heathen? What effect had this success on the priests? What did they do? What effect had the complaint on the mind of Julian? What course did he pursue towards Athanasius? What is said of the parting scene between him and his people? How did he encourage them? What other powerful weapon did Julian use to destroy the Church?

all their ability in support of the pagan religion, and to the injury of the doctrines of Christ. In this work he set the example, by using his own pen with all the venom of his hate, and all the vigor of mind he could command. Having been both a Christian and a pagan, and studied both systems of religion, he considered himself the most competent champion that could enter the lists against the doctrines of the cross. His writings were confuted by a number of able Christian writers, the most noted of whom were Apollonius, Gregory of Nazianzen, and Cyril of Jerusalem. They triumphantly exposed his errors and vindicated the truth. Yet for the short time that Julian was permitted to vex the Church, he probably inflicted upon it more harm than any of his predecessors. The triumph of the heathen, however, was short, and their disappointment great. They fondly believed that the gods had raised up Julian to restore to the empire the ancient religion in all its glory. They flattered the mind of the emperor with this vain conceit, and he believed it. But God had otherwise ordained. While engaged in war with the Persians, he received a mortal wound in his side from a javelin. It is said that when he felt himself wounded, he caught some of the blood in his hand, flowing from his side, and, throwing it in the air, exclaimed, "Take thy fill, Galilean (meaning Christ); thou hast conquered me, but still I denounce thee." When he thus blasphemed the Saviour, he uttered a thousand curses against his gods because they had forsaken him. He has

Did he write against Christianity? What made him think himself able to use this weapon? What writers confuted him? Did he harm the Church much? Did the heathen triumph long? What delusion had they cherished? Were they disappointed? What was his end? Describe his conduct in his dying hour. How did he treat his gods?

always been distinguished by the name of the Apostate. His death occurred in the year 363, after having reigned one year and eight months.

On the death of Julian, Jovinian succeeded to the empire. He was a Christian, sound in the faith, and zealous in its support. His reign lasted only a few months, but during this short period the Church was greatly blessed by his fostering care. He annulled the laws passed by Julian against Christians, and, being a firm supporter of the Nicene Creed, he used his influence against the Arians. His sympathy and favor were conspicuous towards those bishops who had suffered from the Arians, and especially towards Athanasius. He restored this venerable father to his see, and, as a mark of his highest favor, he received a visit from him at Antioch. This zealous support given to the true faith greatly disheartened the Arians, and caused them to rapidly decrease in numbers and power.

But the scene was once more changed, when, upon the death of Jovinian, in the year 364, Valentinian, and his brother Valens, succeeded to the government of the empire. Valentinian, emperor of the West, was a zealous supporter of the Nicene faith, and, through his influence, all the Arians under his rule, a few churches excepted, forsook their heresy. But Valens, in the East, was an equally zealous Arian. With an equal zeal, he labored to revive the failing cause of his party. By his patronage,

By what name has he always been distinguished? When did he die? Who succeeded him? What is said of the character of Jovinian? How did he treat those bishops who had been persecuted by Arians? What did he do for Athanasius? What effect had this course on the Arians? Who succeeded Jovinian? What can you say of the characters of his successors? Did the Arians get power again?

they regained sufficient power to enable them for the last time to afflict the catholics.'

The venerable Athanasius, among others, now suffered the last stroke of malice which their expiring strength allowed them to inflict. He was forced to leave his diocese, and conceal himself. He found a secure though melancholy retreat, in the tomb where the body of his father reposed. In this solemn place he lived four months. Then the touching and continued entreaties of his clergy and people, with the threats of the inhabitants of Alexandria, induced Valens to restore him. He was no more disturbed in the discharge of his sacred duties, but remained in the peaceful possession of his see until the Lord brought him relief from the cares, trials, and afflictions of mortal life, and took him to possess and enjoy the rich and abundant treasures laid up for him in heaven. To no one, since the days of the Apostles, has the term *saint* been applied with more propriety than to him.

Did Athanasius suffer again? Where did he conceal himself this time? How long did he remain here? What induced Valens to restore him? Was he ever disturbed again? Does he deserve the title of saint?

CHAPTER XXXI.

BLOODY CONTEST FOR THE SEE OF ROME.—PILGRIMAGES, RELICS.—ELEVATION OF THE HOST.—AUGUSTINE.—FALL OF DONATISTS AND ARIANS.

THE see of Rome had become a tempting object to human ambition. When its episcopal chair was left vacant by the death of its bishop, disgraceful scenes sometimes occurred in consequence of the struggle between the rival claimants for its possession. The wealth and power possessed by its bishop at this time; the splendor that adorned his church and see; the pomp he displayed, and the luxury in which he lived; the deference that was paid him, and the influence he exerted; all served to charm and captivate the minds of those Christians who admired more the display of worldly greatness than the humble life of the meek and lowly Jesus.

One of the most disgraceful of the conflicts for the possession of this see occurred upon the death of Liberius, in the year 366. Two rival candidates presented themselves, supported by their respective parties. One party elected Damasus to succeed Liberius; the other, Ursinus, a deacon. This double election resulted in schism, violent

What is said of the see of Rome? What occurred upon the occasion of a new election of a bishop? Why was this see an object of ambition? What occurred in 366? What rival candidates strove for the prize?

commotion, conflict, and bloodshed. Neither party would yield to the other. The heat of the factions rose to such a pitch of fury that a civil war actually broke out in Rome. The supporters of Damasus besieged the church where Ursinus and his party were assembled; they broke down the doors, tore off the roof, and then engaged in a bloody battle, in which one hundred and thirty-seven persons of both sexes lost their lives. The combat ended in the triumph of the party of Damasus, and he accordingly became bishop of Rome. In the year 372, the Roman prelate received from Valentinian another degree of spiritual power. He made a law which placed in his hands the power to examine and judge other bishops. This unwise and unlawful attempt to destroy that equality of spiritual power which had existed from the beginning among the highest order of the ministry, was approved by a council of bishops assembled at Rome in the year 378.

The seeds of evil and corruption now sprang up in great profusion, which in later times entirely overshadowed, and for many ages shrouded in darkness, the light of the glorious Gospel. It began to be esteemed, by many, a work that the Lord highly approved to go on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and to the tombs of the martyrs and saints. On their return, they brought away quantities of earth and dust. This was freely distributed by the returning pilgrims among their friends, and was believed to possess the virtue of keeping off evil spirits. Attempts were made

What was the result of this double election? What did the supporters of Damasus do? How many of the party of Ursinus lost their lives? Which party triumphed? What event occurred in 372? Was this act of Valentinian approved? What is said of the progress of corruption in the Church? What is said of pilgrimages? What did the pilgrims bring from the Holy Land? What did they do with these mementoes?

by the monks to impose upon the ignorant people. They peddled false relics, which they professed to have obtained at the tombs of martyrs and saints, and other sacred places. By means of these relics they pretended to perform miracles, and by artifice they often succeeded in deceiving the people.

Two other errors, dreadful in their consequences to the Church, made their appearance in this century. The one was, that Christians might use deceit and falsehood, if they believed that by these means they could promote the interests of the Church. The other error was a belief that God would approve the act, if Christians punished heretics, Jews, and heathen, with penalties and tortures. So soon did the members of Christ forget the torments, pain, and anguish which their fathers had suffered; so ready were they to follow the horrid example of Jews and heathen, which the faithful had abhorred and condemned as the offspring of Satan.

A superstitious practice also had its rise in this century, which at last polluted the Church with the crime of idolatry. It consisted in holding up before the people the bread and wine that had been consecrated for the Holy Communion, to be gazed at and venerated. This was practised by a few churches, and finally resulted in the worship of the *Host* or consecrated wafer, in the Church of Rome.

The opinion now became prevalent that *celibacy*, severe mortification of the body, long and rigid fastings, were especially pleasing to God, and would obtain for those

What imposition was practised by the monks? What two great errors now appeared in the practice of Christians? Did Christians advocate the persecution of those in error? What had they forgotten? What superstitious practice is mentioned? In what error did it finally result? What was now the opinion about celibacy?

who practised them a higher degree of perfection here and of glory hereafter.

Many who were zealous to preserve the primitive purity of the Church, when they saw the progress of superstition so fearfully advancing, boldly raised their voices against it. But their laudable efforts failed to arrest the evil tendency. Among these defenders of primitive simplicity, Jovinian occupies the most prominent place. He taught that all those who kept the solemn vows made by them, or in their behalf, in baptism, and lived according to the rules of piety and virtue laid down in the Gospel, would receive the highest degree of reward. These opinions at first were approved by many Christians. But the Church of Rome condemned his teaching, and the emperor Honorius taking up the matter, banished Jovinian to the island of Boa.

Andraeus, of Syria, severely censured the corrupt manners and practices of the clergy. But his censures were expressed with so great severity and perseverance as to give serious offence, and he was punished with excommunication. His own life was an example of the strictest conformity to the principles of Christian virtue. His ardent zeal not being attended with prudence, produced an opposite effect to what he intended. The extreme severity of his censures caused general disgust, and made those his bitter enemies whom he had hoped to reform and bless. If his course had been less violent, his reflections on the unholy practices of the clergy, coupled with his virtuous example, might have resulted in great good. His expul-

Was there an effort made to stay the progress of superstition and corruption? Did the effort succeed? What is said of Jovinian? What did he teach? Were his opinions approved? How did the Roman Church regard them? What did the emperor Honorius do? What is said of Andraeus? Did he accomplish any good? Why not? How could he have done good?

sion from the communion of the Church, and his indescretion, finally led him into grievous error and sin. He became the father of a sect, and thus contributed his ability to dissolve the unity of the Church. Among other novelties, he taught that God has a human form. He succeeded in inducing many to follow him and embrace his errors.

Fortunately for the Church, the Arians were so much weakened by internal divisions, that they inflicted much less harm upon it than they would have done had they been united. These Arian sects viewed each other with the bitterest aversion. The first of them in numbers and power were the genuine Arians, who boldly and without reserve held that the Son was not begotten of the Father, but like other men was simply created out of nothing. The other Arians, wishing their doctrine to appear less revolting to the orthodox, modified and softened the expression of their opinions. The semi-Arians taught that the Son was similar to the Father in His essence, but that this essence was not a part of His nature, having been only granted Him as a privilege. The chiefs of this party were George of Laodicea and Basilius of Ancyra. The Eunomians were so-called from Eunomeus, their principal leader, a man of much learning and ability. They believed that the Son did not partake of the essence of the Father, and was unlike him in other respects. These were the principal of the Arian sects. But there were many others of less numbers and power, differing from each

Did he remain true to the faith? What errors did he teach? Did he lead many astray? What is said of the Arians? How did the Arian sects treat each other? What was the doctrine of genuine Arians? What of semi-Arians? Who were the chiefs of this party? Who were the Eunomians? What did they believe?

other with various shades of opinion, yet agreeing upon the whole in the denial of Christ's divinity.

The controversies caused by the Arian heresy kept the Christian world in a state of continual foment, and produced extreme views, in some instances, on the part of its enemies. Apollinarus, bishop of Laodicea, was an eminent example of this kind. He had rendered the religion of Christ the most important services, and possessed distinguished merit. But in the heat and violence of his opposition to Arianism, he suffered himself to be carried into an opposite extreme. He denied the perfect humanity of our Saviour,—taught that He had not a human soul, and that the Divine nature was so blended with His humanity, that it suffered with it the pains and death of crucifixion. His doctrine won the favor and support of a great number in the eastern provinces of the empire. But being assailed at the same time by the combined attack of the decrees of the emperors, the decisions of councils, and the writings of the learned, it soon gave way and rapidly declined.

Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra, is charged with having taught that the Son and Holy Ghost were not persons distinct from the Father; that they were but a part of His own essence, and as soon as they had fulfilled their office they would again return into the Father.

Photinus, his disciple, bishop of Surmum, in the year 343, boldly propagated his errors on this subject. They were kindred to those of Marcellus, only more offensive both to the orthodox and Arians. His views were con-

What were the results of Arian controversies? Who was Apollinarus? Into what error did his zeal carry him? Was his error popular? What great combination of power opposed him? What was the result? Who was Marcellus? What were his errors? What were the errors of Photinus? When did he propagate them?

demned by several councils, both catholic and Arian ; he was degraded from his episcopal office and sent into exile, where he died in 372.

Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople, one of the most distinguished semi-Arians, was deposed by a council held in Constantinople in the year 360, and banished. While in exile he declared, with great freedom, sentiments which he had previously concealed, and started a sect called Macedonians, after his own name. His chief error was a belief that the Holy Ghost was "a divine energy, diffused throughout the universe, and not a person distinct from the Father and the Son." A stop was put to this new sect by the council of Constantinople, held in the year 381, called the second general council. One hundred and fifty bishops were assembled at this council. They confirmed the Nicene Creed, and added to it sufficient to fully and clearly declare the doctrine of *three Persons and one God*, which before was not so expressly defined. They proceeded to mark and brand with infamy all known heresies, and determined several other matters which they believed the welfare of the Church demanded. They also advanced the bishop of Constantinople, because of the importance of his see, next in rank to that of Rome. The ancient Gnostic errors had not yet entirely disappeared. Though they had ceased to be popular, and had lost their power to excite the public mind, yet, like a candle sinking low in its socket and about to expire, gives out a struggling

By whom were his errors condemned ? What became of him ? What is said of Macedonius ? Where was he sent ? What did he do there ? What was his chief error ? How was his sect defeated ? What was done by the second general council ? Where was it held ? When ? What action was taken upon all heresies ? What about the see of Constantinople ? What is said of Gnostic errors ?

flash of light, so was it with Gnosticism. It broke out afresh in Spain through the influence of Marc, a citizen of Memphis, in Egypt. He introduced it into this country at the beginning of the fourth century. Though he gained but few converts at first, yet they increased until they were a numerous body, embracing some persons eminent for their learning and piety. The most noted of them was Priscillian, a layman of high birth, learned and eloquent. Several bishops united in preferring charges against him, and he with his followers was banished from Spain by the emperor Gratian. But the same prince, some time after, restored him to his country and privileges. He was accused the second time in the year 384, before Maximus, by whose order he and some of his followers were put to death at Treves. But the act was condemned as barbarous by the bishops of Gaul and Italy. Christians had not yet learned the cruel practice of putting men to death for heretical opinions, nor did they believe God could approve the horrid practice. The errors of Priscillian, however, survived him, and gave the bishops of Spain and Gaul much trouble down to the sixth century.

Near the close of this century, the blessed Virgin became the subject of a violent controversy in Arabia and the countries adjacent. The controversy gave rise to two parties, each taking extreme views. One of them maintained that after the birth of our Lord she ceased to retain her virginity, but became the mother of other children.

Where did they break out afresh? When was Gnosticism introduced into Spain? Who was the most noted Spanish Gnostic? What was done with him? By whom was he banished? By whom recalled? By whom condemned and executed? Had Christians yet learned to put men to death for errors in faith? Did his errors survive him? What controversy arose about the blessed Virgin? What different opinions were expressed about her?

The other party condemned this opinion as horribly profane, and esteemed her above all other mortals, believed her immaculate, and worshipped her as a goddess. They believed it necessary to seek her favor and protection, and accordingly offered sacrifices and oblations to her.

Many other sects and new errors arose in this century, but they are too numerous and of too little importance to deserve the attention or excite the interest of the reader. While new sects were continually appearing, others disappeared. The two that had caused more trouble and done more injury to the Church than any others which had yet appeared, were now rapidly declining and about to pass away forever. These were the Donatists and the Arians. They made their appearance nearly at the same time, and they were doomed to perish about the same time. After Julian restored the banished Donatists to the same privileges as the other citizens of the empire, they flourished greatly till near the close of the century. The number of their bishops is said to have increased to four hundred. But near the close of the century they suddenly and rapidly declined. This event was brought about chiefly by a division among themselves. They were greatly weakened by the division, and were thus easily overcome by the powerful efforts made on the part of the orthodox to accomplish so desirable an end. The chief agent in hastening this sect to an end, next to their own division, was St. Augustine, afterwards bishop of Hippo, in Africa. This great and good man attacked them

What is said of other sects and errors? What two powerful sects were now declining? What is said of the Donatists? What of the number of their bishops? What happened to them near the close of the century? What conspired to ruin the Donatists? What is said of St. Augustine? How did he contribute to the overthrow of the Donatists?

with all his ability of learning, of argument, of zeal, and influence. He exposed, in a powerful manner, their dangerous and seditious principles, in his writings, in his public discourses, and in his private conversation. And he so successfully diffused the warmth and vigor of his own spirit into others, that he animated the whole Church against them. All these means combined, resulted in their speedy and utter overthrow. Other celebrated writers aided St. Augustine in his labor of vindicating truth and exposing error. Among these, the following are the most celebrated : Basil, surnamed *the Great*, on account of his eminent abilities and labors; John, bishop of Constantinople, surnamed Chrysostom, or the golden mouthed, for his extraordinary eloquence; Hilary, celebrated for his able defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, written in twelve books ; Lactantius, who was the most eloquent Latin writer of the century; Ambrose, bishop of Milan, who distinguished himself both against the Arians and heathen; and Jerome, a monk of Palestine, who won great distinction by his translations of the sacred Scriptures from their original tongue into Latin, by his commentaries on the Scriptures, and by his letters. But the glory of most of these illustrious lights reached their zenith in the following century.

The fourth century also witnessed the end of the Arian power as a sect. They likewise rapidly declined near the close of the century. When Theodosius, surnamed the Great, became emperor of the East, he exerted himself in every way to bring their turbulent influence to an end.

What influence did he exert upon the Church ? By what writers was he aided ? Who was Basil ? Chrysostom ? Hilary ? Lactantius ? Ambrose ? Jerome ? In what century are these writers most conspicuous ? What brought down the Arian sect ? When ? Who was Theodosius ?

His attempt was eminently successful, and they suddenly and rapidly passed away. Their power was so completely broken and their body dispersed, that in a short time a few remained attached to their errors; and these few, as if conscious of their error and of the harm they had done, shrank away from the abodes of civilized man, and flickered out their existence among the barbarous tribes of Goths and Vandals.

Where did the Arians expire?

CHAPTER XXXII.

THEODOSIUS THE GREAT.—ARIANS AND DONATISTS OVERTHROWN.—PAGAN IDOLATRY EXTINGUISHED AT ROME.—STATE OF THE CHURCH AT THE CLOSE OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

IN the year 375, Valens and Gratian ruled the empire. Valens being killed in a great battle with the Goths at Adrianople, the administration of the whole empire devolved on Gratian. But finding the burden too great for him to bear alone, he chose Theodosius as his associate. This new emperor was a native of Spain. His father had been a Roman general, and had unjustly suffered death at the hands of Gratian. The choice was the best that could have been made. He was possessed of remarkable powers of mind, a man of towering genius, of great wisdom, and of most noble character. He was free from that vain-glory which so often tarnishes the fame of men in power. He possessed remarkable prudence, and managed his enemies with consummate skill. In prosecuting the war they were waging against his dominions, he pursued a cautious and vigilant policy. He seized every opportunity to exhaust the power of his enemies and to win over their leaders.

Who ruled the empire in 375? What happened to Valens? Did Gratian bear the weight of the whole empire? Whom did he choose as his associate? Who was Theodosius? What can you say of his character? What can you say of his prudence? How did he manage his enemies?

Four years after he became emperor, by pursuing this policy he procured terms of advantageous peace. He invited Athanarie, the chief of his Gothic enemies, to visit his capital and partake of his hospitalities. The invitation was accepted, and the chieftain was amazed at the grandeur and magnificence of the city and palace. When he had viewed all, he exclaimed, "Truly, the emperor of the Romans is a god upon earth, and the presumptuous man who dares lift his hand against him, is guilty of his own blood." Soon after this event, he died. To his remains, the most respectful honors were paid by Theodosius, which so moved the hearts of the Goths that they joined the Roman army, vowing to him, while he lived, their faithful services. In this way he converted his most dangerous enemies into friends and allies. While the disturbances in the East were thus quelled by the able administration of Theodosius, the Western portion of the empire was thrown into great commotion by civil war. Gratian was murdered at Lyons, through the instigation of Maximus, who had risen in rebellion against him. This rebel leader was proclaimed emperor, and the widowed empress, Justina, with her young son, Valentinian II., and her daughter, Galla, were compelled to flee for safety to the protection of Theodosius. The emperor, being a widower, married the beautiful and accomplished Galla. He then marched with a hardy and well disciplined army to meet Maximus. On the banks of the Save he met and defeated the usurper

How long did it take him to secure terms of peace? How did he treat Athanarie? How was the Gothic chief impressed with Rome? How was his body treated after death? How did Theodosius make friends of his enemies? What took place at this time in the western part of the empire? What is said of Maximus? What did Justina do? What was the result? Where did the hostile armies meet?

and executed him. Rising superior to sordid ambition, he nobly associated the young Valentinian II., with him in the government. But the young emperor soon fell a victim to traitors, and Theodosius became the sole ruler of the empire. He was a Christian from principle, and his acts were rendered the more deserving of honored fame by the pure and sublime principles of the gospel which pervaded his mind while he performed them. There was but one noted act from the multitude he performed that to the eye of man deserved a painful regret and deep and sincere repentance. This was a deed of cruel vengeance executed on the people of Thessalonica. The bloody transaction to which we refer, was brought about by some trifling matters. Several trivial disputes had risen between the governor and people that had occasionally angered the latter. This spark of discord was suddenly blown into a flame of popular fury by the imprisonment of the peoples' favorite charioteer in the circus. No sooner had this been done than the citizens rose under their gale of passion and murdered the governor and several other officers of government, and dragged their dead bodies through the mud in the streets. This barbarous and atrocious act was reported by the political minister, Rufinus, in such false and exaggerated colors, that the emperor became incensed beyond measure, and immediately ordered a most terrible vengeance to be poured upon the wicked inhabitants. While a great number of them were assembled in the

What became of Maximus? What did Theodosius then do? What happened to Valentinian? What is said of the Christian character of Theodosius? What event in his life caused painful regret? Where did it occur? What were the circumstances that caused the bloody deed? Of what brutal crime were the citizens of Thessalonica guilty? Whose representation incensed the emperor?

circus, they were slain by his order, to the number of several thousand. This act he afterwards deeply regretted, and, with a true penitent heart, submitted to the sentence of St. Ambrose, his bishop. He was required to suffer penance for the space of eight months, during which time he was not permitted to partake of the Holy Communion.

It was through the zealous co-operation of Theodosius that the power of the Arians and Donatists was so effectually destroyed. Another event that occurred during his reign, and essentially through his influence, has contributed to make his name illustrious. This was the final and complete overthrow of the pagan religion at Rome. For the purpose of accomplishing this grand achievement, he visited Rome, and in union with Valentinian II., whom he had appointed ruler of the West, and who resided there, he planned and executed this illustrious act. They put an end to all sacrifices offered to idols; they demolished the idols; and abandoned the pagan temples to ruin and contempt. From this time may be dated the final and complete overthrow of heathen idolatry at Rome. This was a glorious triumph for Christianity, to see the idols of the imperial city utterly abolished, and the pagan Rome christened as the Lord's from henceforth. When the heart of heathenism was thus changed, the whole system received its death-stroke, which it only required time to feel at its extremities. This was the last important act of Theodosius the Great. Soon

In what manner did he take vengeance on the wicked inhabitants? Did he regret the act? What did his bishop, St. Ambrose, require of him? By what means was the power of the Arians and Donatists subdued? What other great and glorious event occurred? Who united with him in the overthrow of paganism? What became of the idols and temples? What is said of this event? What effect had this event on the whole pagan system?

after it was accomplished he died, in the year 395, aged sixty years, and having reigned sixteen years. His death was deplored by the whole empire, even the heathen joining in the sorrow, though their religion had suffered so severely at his hands. With him expired the glory of the Roman empire, for he was the last of its illustrious rulers. He appointed his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius, his successors, and divided the empire between them. Upon their accession they pursued with zeal the course marked out for them by their illustrious father in matters of religion. They exerted their influence and power, with success, in extending the dominion of Christ on earth, and in suppressing the religion of the heathen.

The fourth century is a remarkable period in the history of the Church. Never were its trials greater, or its triumphs more glorious. It was buffeted by tempests so mighty and so terrible, that if it had been a mere human society, it must inevitably have become a wreck. From an object of loathing and contempt, emerging from the waves of the last and most terrible persecution, covered with the blood of its martyrs, it became an object of royal patronage,—fostered, nourished, adorned, and richly endowed by the munificence of one of the most powerful monarchs that ever ruled the Roman empire. No sooner had it supplanted the religion of the idolater in the empire and became the religion of the state, than its great adversary was suffered to afflict it with the most violent commo-

When did Theodosius die? How was his death received? What expired with him? Who succeeded Theodosius? What course did they pursue? What can you say of the fourth century as an historic period? What of the trials of the Church? What of its prosperity? By what munificence was it aided? What afflictions fell upon it after it became the religion of the State?

tions in its own bosom. The powerful sects of the Arians and Donatists waged a most fearful war against it through nearly the whole century. Other minor sects, too numerous to mention, came to their aid. Yet its great Head and Captain suffered not its foes to triumph. He permitted them to demonstrate the truth of his prophecy that "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

After the death of Lycinius, Christians suffered but little persecution from the heathen in the empire. In the remoter provinces they occasionally felt the smart of heathen malice. Before Athanarie, king of the Goths, had been subdued by the genius and policy of Theodosius, he persecuted for a time that part of his nation that had become Christian with great severity. In Persia, the Magi and Jews succeeded, by false charges, in inflaming the mind of the king, Sapor II., against Christians. They made him believe that Christians were enemies to his government and the secret emissaries of the Roman emperor. By this means he was induced to persecute them three different times. The last of his persecutions was most severe, lasting forty years, and was conducted with terrible cruelty. It terminated in the year 370.

It is wonderful that the Church not only survived these conflicts, but actually made progress. Its course was continually onward. In all the provinces of the empire, churches without number were erected, and many of them were magnificent buildings. Numerous barbarous and un-

What is said of the influence of the Arians and Donatists? What truth did the enemies of the Church demonstrate? When did Christians cease to be persecuted? What is said of Athanarie? How did Christians fare in Persia? What induced Sapor to persecute Christians? How long did his last persecution last? When did it end? What is said of the progress of the Church under these difficulties?

civilized nations were Christianized. The influence of Constantine and the other Christian emperors, seconded by the zealous labors of bishops and clergy, conspired to produce this rapid extension of the kingdom of our Lord. Nor was the culture of the mind neglected. A high regard was paid to learning. Schools were encouraged and their number greatly increased; libraries were endowed and multiplied, and the study of the fine arts and philosophy was patronized with a noble and generous spirit. The character of sermons lost much of that simplicity which adorned them in earlier times. The style was more studied, polished, and elegant than it had been. The sermons were generally delivered with more care and more in harmony with the rules of Grecian eloquence, while the hearers, in many places, were encouraged in expressing their approbation by clapping their hands and by other modes common in popular assemblies.

In their zeal to attract and convert the heathen to the faith of Christ, many of the bishops and clergy were led to depend too much upon human instrumentality and too little upon God. They prepared a pompous ritual,—wore rich and gorgeous robes, mitres, and tiaras,—the service was embellished with wax tapers, processions, images, and gold and silver vases. This kind of display was common in heathen temples, and being used in the temples of the Lord, they believed the heathen would be attracted by it and so drawn into the Christian church.

The public services of the Church consisted of prayers

What other improvements attended the progress of the Church? What change took place in the character of sermons? What is said of their style? What of their delivery? In what did the people indulge? On what did the bishops and clergy depend more? Why? What efforts at display were made? Whom did they imitate?

and hymns, the chanting of the Psalms of David, reading portions of the sacred Scriptures, and sermons addressed to the people, followed by the Holy Communion, which was administered as often as every Lord's day, and in some places more frequently. The order of services was regulated by liturgies, which increased in numbers by the addition of new nations and tribes to the kingdom of our Lord. For it was left with the bishop and his clergy to frame liturgies to suit the nature of the times, laws, and peculiarities of the country in which they were used.

A shade of difference still prevailed between the Eastern and Western churches in the observance of one important Christian festival. In the East, the birth and baptism of our Saviour was celebrated as one festival on the 6th day of January, and called Epiphany. On the contrary, the Western church observed them separately, and celebrated the festival of the Nativity on the 25th of December. The number of ordinary festivals was greatly enlarged by the addition of new saints, each additional saint requiring a festival day to honor his memory. The festivals and fasts were celebrated with greater pomp than formerly, and with less spiritual benefit. They encouraged indolence and lifeless formality, and, what is worse, they were made in some instances the occasion of sensual indulgence.

The fast of Lent was not yet confined to a fixed number of days. But the festival of the Resurrection, or Easter, continued fourteen days, and was celebrated with the highest expression of joy.

How often was the Holy Communion administered? What regulated the order of services? Who framed liturgies? Were there many? What difference still existed between the Eastern and Western churches? How did they differ in the observance of our Lord's nativity? What is said of the number of ordinary festivals? What can you say of the manner of celebrating the festivals of the Church? What is said of Lent and of Easter?

The sacrament of baptism was administered on the vigils of Easter and Whit-sunday by the bishop or by a presbyter appointed by him, as was the practice in the previous century. The fonts were placed in the porch nigh the entrance of the church, to indicate that as the door is the place of entrance to the church edifice, so is baptism the door of entrance into the kingdom of Christ. All who had not been baptized in infancy were required to remain as catechumens until well instructed in the doctrines of Christ before they could receive the sacrament. Penitents, catechumens, and those Christians who were believed to be under the influence of evil spirits, were not permitted to partake of the Eucharist. A veil of mystery was thrown round this sacrament by the clergy, to inspire in the minds of believers a spirit of reverence, and to excite, in those who had not partaken of the sacred mystery, an earnest longing to enjoy the privilege.

In this state we find the Church at the conclusion of the fourth century. Its triumphs over all its foes; its continued growth amidst the combined and deadly opposition of Jews, infidels, and heathen; the fact of its growing with renewed vigor after being deluged with the fires of persecution; the firmness with which it endured the dangerous shock of powerful internal foes,—all these things combined must have impressed the minds of intelligent unbelievers with the utter futility of any human attempts to destroy the Church, or even arrest its progress. The heathen power in the empire was now so greatly reduced that it could do but little harm; the Jewish malice still

When was baptism administered? Where were the fonts placed? What is said of catechumens? Who were denied the Communion? Why did the clergy throw a veil of mystery over the Holy Communion? What effect had the trials of the Church and its progress on unbelievers?

existed, but their power was impotent,—and those powerful sects which at one time rivalled the Church in numbers, were humbled and almost extinguished. There was a powerful array of learning, eloquence, and ability on the side of truth, sustained by the influence, power, and munificence of two Christian emperors, following in the steps of their illustrious father, Theodosius the Great. Thus amply equipped for the battle, we may reasonably expect to see the army of the faithful, under the Captain of our salvation, advancing to yet more glorious conquests in a world's redemption.

What is said of the power of the heathen and Jews? What of powerful sects? What abilities did the Church possess at the close of the fourth century? What may we expect from the exercise of this ability?

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